

CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF CANADA.

As we look back, Mr. Speaker, on the events of the past year, we have much cause for gratification, and when we turn to the future we find it bright and encouraging. The signs that meet us everywhere in Canada are those of peace, progress and prosperity. The one question which seriously threatened the harmony of our people and the good-will which should prevail between our citizens of different creeds—a question which a few months ago was a burning one and a cause of great anxiety—has been so happily settled that now it is scarcely mentioned. At no time in the history of the Dominion have the people been more united, more harmonious, and more hopeful and confident respecting the future of our country. In the centres of manufactures, trade and commerce, there is an activity which tells of confidence in the present and in the future. The great agricultural interests, which are the foundation of our country's prosperity, are on a better footing than for many years past. Encouraged to produce not only for the home markets but for the markets of the world, our farmers everywhere are applying themselves to their work with intelligence and skill. The ships which have come to our seaports during the past year, are insufficient to carry the increasing volume of commerce, and the shipwrights of the world are busy in constructing new vessels for this trade. Our long delayed canal enlargements are being pressed forward to early completion, and give promise of affording increased facilities for the transportation of the products of the great west to our shipping ports. Railway enterprises east and west are actively assisting in the good work. The fishermen of our Atlantic and Pacific coasts continue to reap the rich harvest of the sea. In all directions we find an extraordinary development of the mineral wealth of the Dominion. The powerful magnet of gold, which is found in several quarters of the Dominion, is doing much to attract capital and population. The new mines in the province of Ontario give promise of great development and profit. In the east, the mines of Nova Scotia, which have been working with considerable success for many years, are to-day giving most satisfactory results, and new discoveries are constantly being

made. In the west, the province of British Columbia is steadily growing in fame as a rich mining country. The northern regions of our Dominion, which were long regarded as of little value, have become sources of boundless wealth. A few years ago, as I sat at the breakfast table in a Paris hotel, I was addressed by a neighbour, of whose nationality there could be no doubt. "Sir," he said, "from what part of our little Republic might you be?" I answered that I was not from his "little Republic" but from the greater one to the north. My friend was puzzled for a moment, and I had to remind him that the greater part of the North American Continent did not belong to his "little Republic," but was under the British flag. "Well, sir," he said triumphantly, "we do not claim to own the ice house." These great northern regions, which my American friend described so contemptuously as "the ice house," are to-day counted among the famous lands of the world. The "Yukon" and "Klondike" are world-wide names, and the land through which these rivers run is attracting to itself many thousands of people from the great centres of civilization. In nearly every department of industry in Canada there is activity and confidence.

We are not foolish enough to claim that all this has been brought about by our policy, although we are well aware that if the results had been the reverse, the blame, justly or unjustly, would have rested upon our shoulders. We are well aware, and we gratefully recognize the fact, that the prosperity that has come to Canada is due to the liberality of a kind Providence in giving us a bountiful harvest. One thing we do claim, and all we claim, as respects our policy, is that so far as legislative measures may help to encourage and strengthen a people, such has been the result of the action we have taken. Against the representations of our opponents we place the record of the past year, and the judgment of the Empire at large. Never was a tariff policy submitted to Parliament, which was received with greater satisfaction by the people of Canada, than that which was announced a year ago. Never in the history of the British colonies was a measure proposed which in so large a degree commanded the interest and received the approval of Great and Greater Britain.

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