

THE CIVILIAN

VOL. VI.

NOVEMBER 14, 1913.

No. 15

THE DOMINION ARCHIVES.

The Branch of the Public Service that Keeps the Records of Canada's Life and Growth.

A nation's career determines its Archives. The four hundred years of Canada's growth abounds with a wealth and variety of human interest. A great world awakening, the herald of a new civilization, gave her birth. With a dauntless courage and a jealous loyalty to their sovereigns, rival seamen explored her shores and revealed the wealth of her lands. An heroic faith in her future inspired her first colonists with a persistent perseverance. Her Missionaries in piercing the wilderness and suffering the tortures of native savagery set new limits to human endurance. The adventurous zeal of her explorers opened the lands where now two nations dwell. The waters of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Illinois revealed to them their secrets. Nor is the less romantic task of settlement and colonization devoid of interest. The transplanting of the Institutions of France in a crude New-world soil was a work worthy of the genius of a Richelieu and of a Colbert. And then the crisis came. In the greatest drama of the 18th century Canada played a leading role. On the Plains of Abraham the destiny alike of the New World and of the old was fixed. Henceforth Canada's course followed new channels. Her institutions changed, a new race sought shelter on her shores and two peoples, till now inveterate foes, united for the development

of her vast resources. Settlement advanced, new institutions were designed to meet the ever-changing needs. A realisation of the dangers of separation induced the British Colonies to form a closer union. A federation was completed containing a regard for cherished interests of the individual colonies with provision for the larger concerns of public advantage of Canada. The federation expanded and was made to extend from coast to coast. And now a two fold problem has arisen—the fostering and directing of a national spirit in which the difference of race, of creed, of political tradition may blend harmoniously, and, in concert with the other members of the family, the evolution of a new and vaster scheme of government which may unify and organise the nations of the British Empire. These are the conditions which determine the character of Canada's Archives.

The History of the Canadian Archives.

While as early as 1731 the preservation of the records of the colony had been considered by the government, it was not until 1872 that the movement which resulted in the present Archives establishment had its origin. As the result of a petition presented to Parliament setting forth the disadvantages under which authors and literary enquirers laboured in