

round her sturdy maples, and she never lost an inch of it. On through the years she struggled, gaining a little here and there, and always deftly taking in the slack.

A great man arose in the Colonial Office, James Stephen, first Counsel and afterwards Under-Secretary—a remarkable member of a remarkable family. Now and then he willingly (an Upper Canada Governor said traitorously) let go a few more fathoms of the rope, and Canadians gladly gathered it in. Lord Durham came in 1838, and on his return issued his famous report, the “charter of Colonial liberties”; responsible government was voted unanimously in the first session of the first Assembly of United Canada; and since that date (1841) Canada has had the long end of the rope. From 1867, when the Canadian Federation took joint hold of it, eventual possession of every foot of it has never been doubtful. In 1870, the North-West joined us, and in 1871 our end of the rope was long enough to give British Columbia a grip of it. I may again be wrong, but my notion is that no part of that rope will ever recross the ocean.

It is a grand story, that of Canada’s fight for freedom—for the great British right of self-government, and it is full of interesting and even exciting dramatic incident. All Canadians should know it well. It is the chiefest part of Canadian history. And when we know it, we know the political road which Canada has persistently and with the most unswerving determination pursued, from the commencement of her history down to the present day.

That road, need I say, is the road which leads to completest self-government. At every stage of it there have been many of our own people (often some of the best of them) who thought that we had gone far enough and who deprecated any further advance. But Canada as a whole, has never faltered and never hesitated. As she grew stronger, the feeling—the sentiment (Let us note it) has also grown stronger, that Canadians, better than anybody else, know what is best for themselves.

Observe now that the road of Canada’s political development has not led us an inch from the British King, but that it has led us towards completest self-government.

What now is our present position? You know it, and I shall not dwell upon it. We are very near the end of the road. Practically, although not theoretically, we enjoy legislative independence and administrative independence; we make our own tariffs; we tax the British manufactures as we please and do not now receive official remonstrance; we negotiate with foreign States for reciprocity arrangements; and by sending Mr. Lemieux to Japan we have added a long step to our previous advance toward the management of our own foreign affairs.

We are so very nearly independent that the British Government itself has given us (at the recent Conference) the clearest and most