

## PREFACE



THE holding of the Fifth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in Montreal will mark an epoch in the history of the Commercial Metropolis of Canada. The interesting event partakes of the nature of a tacit acknowledgment of the commercial importance of the great Laurentian city in the greatest commercial empire the world has ever known, and the acknowledgment is as well deserved as it is historically interesting.

There is no doubt that the holding of this important Congress will impart a stimulus to the spirit of enterprise, always alert, and particularly so just at the present juncture, throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion. In Montreal this impulse will be felt more strongly than elsewhere, and the results may be fairly expected to be marked and enduring.

Probably great commercial enterprises—some of them perhaps destined to have most important bearings upon the future of that great confederation of free nations we know as the British Empire—will trace their origin to this great trade congress. New standards of imperial commercialism are likely to be discussed; new ideas of imperial trade evolved and disseminated. The master minds of the Old World's commerce and finance will be in contact with the ruling spirits of British-American commercial activity, the old, wise, cautious east is coming to the young, energetic and confident west to compare notes and to devise means for extending the trade of the Empire and the trade within the Empire.

With such elements at work, the Congress can scarcely fail to produce tangible results, and when, in the future, men wish to speak intelligently of these they will be interested in knowing something of the commercial conditions immediately surrounding the members of the Congress. Hence arises one of the needs for a permanent presentment of the commercial and financial aspect of Montreal in the present Year of Grace.

There is no doubt, moreover, that a story of Montreal's rise to the proudly pre-eminent position she holds in the trade and commerce of the Dominion of Canada will be at once interesting and useful to those brother-Britons from overseas, who come to Canada to attend the Congress. Even the commercial history of Montreal is romantic, while its general story, interlarded with tales of savage wars, of heroic soldiers, of stern churchmen, of devoted martyrs, of noble women, of scoundrelly traitors, of autocratic bureaucrats, of hot-headed rebels, of captures by enemies, of vast business enterprises, of sorrows, of happiness, of hope, but never of despair, is a theme worthy of the very witchcraft of history.

Nor is anything in the shape of a history of a great city like Montreal ever without interest for its own people, for there never was a more truthful remark than that "the heart of a nation as it grows strong craves for knowledge of its ancestry."

It is easy for the Montrealer to derive an ennobling impulse from the past. True, "forward," has been the watchword of Montreal ever since the place has borne the name, and the succeeding pages will show that her sons have only looked back to derive useful lessons from past errors and to profit by dear-bought experience.

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