

THE GREATNESS OF OUR HERITAGE.

GENTLEMEN :

From the list of subjects which were forwarded with your request, I have chosen "The Greatness of our Heritage" as being suitable for the occasion, though ill adapted for compression into a short article; and if I address principally the elder scholars, it is because their knowledge of the history of our own and of other nations will enable them to elaborate what I must condense.

The Physical Greatness of our Heritage,

"Whose flanks are mighty Oceans,
Whose base the Northern Sea,"

needs little proof; a single glance at an ordinary School Geography shews it to be in form, as in size, one of the most valuable portions of the Earth's surface; and as if Providence had kept in reserve its best gifts for this latest born of nations, we have, wafted into our spacious western harbors and along our picturesque Pacific coast, the trade winds of the Western Ocean, and with them that ocean stream, heated in the cauldrons of the Asiatic coast, to aid in making flowers bloom and trees bud, near the Arctic circle, as early as on the mighty Mississippi, or the still mightier St. Lawrence, just as the great stream poured out by the Mexican Gulf foils the Ice King's blockade of the magnificent harbors of our Eastern coasts, and nourishes those deep-sea pastures of which Canada possesses the richest in the world. As a means of access to the inner part of this favored land, Nature has cleft our rugged Eastern coast with a wide and deep Gulf, from the head of which mighty rivers and great lakes bear the home-hunter to near the verge of our great Cereal Table-land, where, through future wheat fields, turn and wind the Rivers of the great Plain, the Red, Assiniboine, Souris, Qu'Appelle and Saskatchewan, and over it all there has been given to us a climate which breeds no malaria, and this great area, with its southern latitude that of Rome, is free from the pestilences which have from time to time scourged the peoples of Western Europe. I might go on indefinitely recounting our blessings, but I must limit what I would wish to say about the Physical Greatness of our Heritage, to be able to speak of its other aspects within the space allowed; and so close with an unchallenged statement made in the Legislature of the Dominion regarding its then less well-known Western portion, as follows :

"That it has the greatest extent of coast line; the greatest number of miles of river and lake navigation; the greatest extent of coniferous forest; the greatest coal measures; the most varied distribution of precious and economic minerals; the most extensive salt and fresh water fisheries; and the greatest extent of arable and pastoral land of any country in the world."