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“FROM its geographical position and its peculiar characteristics, Manitoba may be regarded as the keystone of that mighty arch of sister Provinces which spans the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was here that Canada, emerging from her woods and forests, first gazed upon her rolling prairies and unexplored North-West, and learned, as by an unexpected revelation, that her historical territories of the Canadas, her eastern seaboard of New Brunswick, Labrador, and Nova Scotia, her Laurentian lakes and valleys, lowlands and pastures, though themselves more extensive than half a dozen European kingdoms, were but the vestibules and antechambers to that till then undreamed of Dominion, whose illimitable dimensions confound the arithmetic of the surveyor and the verification of the explorer.”  
—*Speech of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, at Pembina, in 1879.*