

REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

UNUSUAL in the story of nations is the mental attitude of Canada on this the forty-fourth time we celebrate Confederation. The year 1867 is as much the natal day of Canada as 1776 is of the United States. Friday of this week Canadians quietly recalled the fact that in 1867 four provinces of Canada federated into a Dominion. Next Monday the United States, with rather less territory and eleven times as many people, will go into a national, polylingual convulsion over the fact that in 1776 thirteen colonies threw George III's tea overboard in Boston Harbour and refused any longer to drink the health of the King over the water—even in tea. Such is the difference of temperament—some say of government.

Uncle Sam will jubilate this year as sonorously as ever, in spite of the fact that he is annually losing about 100,000 of his thriftiest farmer citizens to Canada, with an aggregate yearly gain of about twenty million dollars to this country.

IN Canada—what a contrast! Skimming the cream from Uncle Sam's milkpans; with two hundred millions of his capital invested in Canadian industries; with prospects for a reasonable reconsideration of tariffs; with thousands of well-selected British citizens coming in every year along with carefully hand-picked thousands from central Europe; conspicuous example to the Empire of the greatest self-governing colony; fair into an era of prosperity and commercial expansion unequalled in the story of nation-building; with eight millions of people instead of three and a half millions in 1867; with nine provinces in place of four; with 25,000 miles of railway instead of 2,500; with 101 millions Dominion revenue as against 14 millions; with 800 millions imports and exports in contrast to 130 millions; above all, with the sense of an incipient self-conscious nationalism from coast to coast. In the face of all these tremendous advantages Canada observes Dominion Day with open-air horse shows in the cities, citizens fishing in the country, villages deserted and rural regions either asleep or gathering hay; steamboats crowded with people going away somewhere; not the boom of a gun, or a single national oration; no fetes, no great gatherings of people; scarce even a rag of bunting or a flag; hardly a celebration worthy the name: merely an observance.

Such is temperament coupled with history.

SOMEBODY suggested that the Canadian Clubs take up the work of making Dominion Day a real national holiday. The idea is good, but the Canadian Clubs have not responded. The truth is that Canadians cannot be induced to do much flag-waving. The French-Canadian celebrates St. Jean Baptiste day with a fervour not shown on Dominion Day and the British-Canadian has always paid more attention to May 24th than July 1st. To the outsider this might indicate that Canadians are lacking in love of country, but such is not the case. We are of two races and we are peculiar—there is no other explanation. A half century hence it may be different.

CANADA'S greatest problem, undoubtedly, is the assimilation and training of her new citizens. The official homestead returns for April indicate this problem clearly. In that month, there were 7,209 homestead entries in the three western provinces. Of these, 3,530 were Canadians or British, while the rest were foreigners made up as follows: United-Statesers, 2,418; Austria-Hungarians, 338; Russians, 337; Norwegians, 144; Germans, 122; Swedes, 100; others, 320.

Each of these entries represents 2½ people, or a total of 18,778 persons. Two out of four of these people are foreigners, trained in the ideals and circumstances and historical associations of a foreign citizenship. To transform them into Canadians, with a knowledge of Canadian history, Canadian institutions and Canadian ambitions is a task of supreme importance.

AS a stimulus to our national pride, we recognise that the forty-third year of Canada's history has been the greatest in every respect. The influx of new settlers was nearly twice as great as in any other year with one exception. Foreign trade broke all pre-

vious records, the increase in May, for example, being over thirty per cent. Domestic trade was also greater in volume than in any previous year. Savings bank accounts and general bank deposits increased enormously. The railways did an increased business and laid more rails than in any previous year. The increase in wealth must have been tremendous.

Indeed, the year ending June 30th, 1910, may be fairly described as a "boom" year. The pessimists have been utterly routed and development has proceeded at a rate which even the greatest optimist was unable to foresee. The Sun of Prosperity has shone upon this fruitful country with a brilliancy which has never been surpassed.

Amid all this growth and this prosperity, it behooves us to think for a moment of the Fathers of Confederation, of the great men who struggled in the day of small things to lay deep and sure the foundations of a new nation. Let us then, on this Dominion Day, recall the names of Taché, Macdonald, Cartier, Brown, Galt, Mowat, McDougall, McGee, Tilley, Mitchell, Tupper, Archibald and the other great men who, with prophetic minds, framed the Confederation Resolutions. Let us also recall the names of those to whom fell the duty of working out this new constitution and of enlarging the new Dominion until to-day it stretches from Atlantic to Pacific and from the 49th parallel to the Arctic Ocean.

PERHAPS the sanest word one may express on this Dominion Day is that there is a danger in over-expansion. The most careful business men are to-day pursuing a conservative policy. They are beginning to get ready for the period of dull times which comes along so regularly in the history of finance and commerce. They are speculating as to whether this period of tremendous expansion will last another year or another two years before the inevitable readjustment takes place. The consumption of food, other than bread, has almost outrun the supply. Meat, butter, cheese and eggs bring such high prices for domestic consumption that the export trade in them has steadily diminished. The price of real estate in the larger cities and towns has advanced so tremendously that conservative capitalists are investing their money in bonds rather than in real estate mortgages. The rate of interest and the rate of wages have gone up together. Mergers and flotations are numerous. Extravagance is in the air.

Of course, there is no immediate danger. The bubble will be blown much bigger before it bursts. There is a certain amount of justice and reasonableness in the present expansion, and these will be worked much harder before they disappear. But it will not be long before thousands of speculative buyers of town-lots and other properties will begin to wonder if they can get out without a loss. Manufacturers who have discounted the future will be having serious interviews with their bankers. Gentlemen with mortgages on their automobiles will begin to speculate on the price of second-hand machines. Suddenly the banks will call in a percentage of their commercial loans and the storm will be upon us.

This is not to say that Canada will not continue to expand and develop. Canada will go on growing for a century slowly and surely, but every little while there will be a year which will be unhealthy for fools and speculators.

THERE never was a Dominion Day in Canada when so many people were speculating about the future of Canada. With forty-four years of a confederated past and a prosperous present, Canadians of to-day and to-morrow have much to tempt the imagination. Some believe in Canada as a perennial part of the Empire, with representation in an Imperial Parliament. Some believe in ultimate Canadian independence—just when, they do not profess to predict, but as naturally as the ripe fruit falls from the tree. Perhaps there are a few who cling to the idea of absorption with the Pan-American Union. Time will tell. At present the general sentiment of Canada is nothing if not Imperial.

Canada has no need to anticipate history. The forces that determine her destiny can never be purely national, but must come in large measure from without. Canadians will not be easily stampeded into any course of action that may imperil the Empire. We are not a precipitate people. Whatever the future, Canada can never afford to forget the stern but splendid story of her romantic past. It is to be hoped that Canadian history will be more studied by the present generation than it ever was by their ancestors. Every Dominion Day is a step in history.