

Imperial legislation, received the Royal sanction, and became the Constitution of Canada on the 1st July, 1867. All the eastern provinces were thereupon united in federal bonds, and four years later British Columbia and the vast territory once under the sway of the Hudson's Bay Company entered the union.

Having mentioned some of the events which ushered in the birth of the new Dominion, it will now be my purpose to furnish in a concise form a general account of the great region embraced within its limits, all of which is under the control of the Canadian Government. Preliminary thereto it seems proper that I should refer to some of those early discoverers and daring travellers who gave to the world the first knowledge of the country.

Last session, Mr. Frasee, when he addressed the Institute, referred to Sebastian Cabot, who touched the east coast of Labrador so long ago as 1496, and to Jacques Cartier who, in command of two or three French vessels, sailed up the St. Lawrence in 1534, and proceeded to establish trading ports, which proved to be the beginning of the old province of Canada, now Quebec. Attention being now directed to a more extended field, in fact, to the northern half of North America, our inquiries must necessarily take a wider range, and embrace discoveries on the Pacific, on the Arctic, as well as on the Atlantic coast.

In the fifteenth century, when the Continent of America was first discovered, the dimensions of the globe were but imperfectly known. Its circumference was thought to be much less than it has since proved to be, and the newly-discovered land was supposed to be the eastern shores of Asia. Spain and Portugal were then the great maritime powers of the world, and they agreed, under a Treaty of Partition founded on a bull issued by Pope Alexander VI in the year 1494, that the Spaniards should possess exclusive control over the western route to Asia, while the Portuguese should communicate through eastern channels. The question of jurisdiction having thus been settled and stamped with the authority of the highest power in those days, the Portuguese pursued their discoveries to the east by way of the Cape of Good Hope, while the Spaniards endeavoured to find their way, in a westerly direction, through new seas and unknown lands, to India. The Spanish ships cruised along the Atlantic coast of America in the hope of finding their way to the south of Asia. In 1513 the Isthmus of Darien was crossed, and in three years afterwards Spanish navigators penetrated the Straits of Magellan; and thus the Pacific Ocean was discovered at two widely separate points.

In 1592, Juan de Fuca is reported to have followed the Mexican