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The Semi-Centennial of Confederation

By CHARLES R. McCULLOUGH

THERE will be ushered in on Dominion Day in the year nineteen hundred and seventeen the Semi-Centennial of Canadian Confederation—the jubilee of the Canadian people. The outstanding importance of the event and the adequate marking of it by Canadians should now begin to possess the minds of our people and lead them to plan for its celebration on a scale proportioned to the growing greatness of Canada.

We are not a demonstrative people. Those without the border noting this have deemed us non-patriotic. From time to time, however, the deep, strong current of national sentiment has risen against some great obstruction and demonstrated to the world that patriotism is a force in Canada and as such demands consideration and respect.

NO one may read the pre-Confederation debates without being deeply stirred by the sentiments uttered by our ever-to-be-remembered Fathers of Confederation. They employed their great talents for a most noble purpose when they sank party and parochial differences, as well as racial and sectarian ones, and together fought valiantly for a principle that alone could make those divided provinces great and enduring.

Macdonald, Cartier, Brown, Tache, McGee, Langbein, Howe, Tupper and other worthies gave themselves unreservedly to the realization of national unity—the dream of a Uniacke (1800), of a Sewell (1815), of a Robinson (1822), of a Durham (1839), of a Hamilton (1855), and of a Morris (1858-9).

MORRIS, of South Lanark, in treating this great question in his *Nova Britannica*, about the middle of the last century, said: "The dealing with the destinies of a future Britannic Empire, the shaping its course, the laying its foundations broad and deep and the erecting thereon a noble and enduring structure, are indeed duties that may well evoke the energies of our people and nerve the arms and give power and enthusiasm to the aspirations of all true patriots."

When Thomas D'Arcy McGee quoted these prescient words in the Legislative Assembly of the little Canada of 1865, cheers resounded throughout the hall, imagination was quickened and hearts were strangely stirred.

In 1917 it were strange indeed if seeing realized in great measure this splendid prophecy we fail to celebrate everywhere in Canada the success of their desire and to do honour to the memory of our great forebears—the Fathers of Confederation.

THAT the architects and builders of the national fabric designed and executed well no one will deny. That they planned and laboured nobly, every Canadian will gladly confess. Ought we not, then, in this the day of our increasing national strength and growing prosperity to pause in the rush of modern life to consider the work of their hands, how greatly it has prospered and blessed us—and so make holiday to celebrate their splendid service.

In view of the many besetting difficulties Confederation was hardly possible had there not been "Giants in those days."

Half a century ago the contest between the parochialist and the unionist was often bitter and sustained. The protagonists of a great cause did not, however, lose heart in their noble fight for the realization of the bigger idea of uniting the scattered and occasionally hostile provinces of British North America by diplomacy and argument rather than by the "Blood and iron" method subsequently used in making a great European state.

SURELY the greatness of the measures of our own "Fathers" will compare favourably with those of the other Fathers of a European Confed-

eracy. Surely, too, it is the highest form of economy to preserve human lives and to conserve national treasure.

In 1917 let us witness to the world that we desire to magnify the triumph of a great idea won by clear intellects and eloquent tongues in the long ago.

LET the idea of unity prevail amongst us. Let 1917 deepen and widen this. Let the confidence of Canadians in Canada increase, and the good will and harmony of our people grow abundantly. Let us realize that "faith is better than distrust, and concord than disagreement."

Let us prepare ourselves for this great national and imperial event by designating ourselves everywhere in Canada as Canadians, not as provincialists. Let us not, anywhere in Canada, describe ourselves by the tongue we speak, by an ancestral race or by the church to which we adhere. And furthermore, let us dwell upon our many agreements rather than upon our few differences. Pride in Canada is a cardinal agreement, a noble resolve to give her our willing service, and national co-operation to accomplish great ends, ought to be added thereto.

If we would hasten the day of the constructive statesman, we must as a people genuinely pursue great ideals. If men of vision are to realize for us in practice those things for which we yearn, the obligation rests upon us to form a fine public opinion. If Canadians generally understood the deeper

meaning of Confederation, 1917 would reveal to ourselves and to the world a nation not of magnificent physical proportions only, but possessed also of a truly great soul.

IF the national mind is occupied with great ideas and seeks their realization, the nation's progress and safety present and future are assured. Material progress cannot give Canada abiding greatness. The spiritual side of the nation must be developed if the nation is to endure.

A wider and deeper understanding of our history and the retelling at the nation's firesides of the stories and traditions of the past will do much to exalt and strengthen the spirit of this people. The pages of Canada's history have been ennobled by great names; great figures played great parts under the French and as well as under the English kings.

IN 1917 let us recall them every one and more deeply carve their names and deeds on the nation's marbles. In song and story let us again celebrate the heroisms of the men and women, ay of children too, of the Old Regime, when from the rude battlements of the New France proudly floated the golden lilies of the Old.

In 1917 let us again tell the tales of rare courage and patient sacrifice of those sturdy and high-principled men and women—the United Empire Loyalists—of the long-ago. Let us consider the things for which they stood and the sacrifices they made at the high call of duty. The wildernesses to which they came are to-day the homes of many happy husbandmen and proud cities are planted where they felled the massive maples.

Let the millions who have entered into their labours rise and bless the forefathers, whether of French or of British origin, to whom we owe the body and spirit of this nation of incalculable possibilities.

LET the plan of celebration be in part the re-assembling at the nation's capital of all the surviving Fathers of Confederation and of all the parliamentarians who have sat in the senate and commons since 1867.

Let there be reunions at the provincial capitals of the assemblymen and councillors and of the lieutenants-governor since Confederation.

Let our judges and ex-judges assemble for the consideration of national measures.

Let the universities, colleges, and schools of learning generally bid welcome to their graduates scattered throughout the world.

Let the great men and women of Canada, wherever resident, assemble here in groups to discuss science, literature, art, music, medicine, engineering, economics, philanthropy, education, conservation, government, and the many other complex problems confronting modern civic and national life.

Let us bid come in 1917 the surviving pro-consuls who have represented their sovereign and ours since the days when "Charles Stanley, Viscount Monck, Governor-General of British North America, and Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and for the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Island of Prince Edward, and Vice-Admiral of the same," represented Victoria the Good amongst us.

And to this great family reunion of Canadians, home-gathered from the whole wide world, let the premiers of Britain and the Outer Britains be invited as the nation's guests.

And finally to this his greatest Dominion beyond the seas, let the attendance at Canada's jubilee of His Gracious Majesty the King, be asked, that the festival of Nation and Empire may be complete.

With forethought and deliberation let us move toward this epoch in our history. Let us aspire to fulfill in part our great destiny—that of leadership in the great family of British nations—and this shall surely come to us if we make ourselves worthy of that high post of honour.



Interior, House of Commons, Ottawa.