



Mr. J. S. Willison.

## The East and Confederation

SOME EXTRACTS FROM A REMARKABLE SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE OPENING MEETING OF THE HALIFAX CANADIAN CLUB, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, BY MR. J. S. WILLISON, EDITOR OF THE TORONTO NEWS.

**F**ORTY years of Confederation were reviewed by Mr. J. S. Willison at the opening meeting of the Halifax Canadian Club this week. He admitted that there were long years during which Canada's future was clouded with gloom and apprehension. "We have

had petty insurrections, provincial disaffections and racial conflict." Nevertheless, in spite of all difficulties and differences there never was danger of imminent dissolution of Confederation. Canada's early days of "union" were similar to those in the United States and in Australia. South Africa will probably have the same kind of trouble.

"But all these asperities and irritations and convulsions have been moderated and composed by the sympathetic and practical genius of Canadian statesmanship and through four decades the nation has stood in ever-increasing security, rising steadily into more stately proportions, and sheltering within its far extending borders millions of prosperous freemen, recruited from every nation on the earth, and merging by direct and inevitable processes into a common nationality."

Mr. Willison holds the opinion that the Eastern Provinces have sacrificed more for Confederation and received less than any other communities in Canada. "Nothing is more certain than that it was the expectation of the Maritime Provinces that under Confederation they would have a low tariff, railway connection with Upper Canada, increase of trade and growth of population, better fiscal relations with the United States and a liberal fisheries convention, and it is a curious fact, so far as my research extends, that in considering the position of these Provinces there was a distinct disinclination to contend for the incorporation of the Western Territories into the new Commonwealth. I make these statements in the interest of historical accuracy, and not with any desire to reopen ancient controversies or to minimise the advantages of the Confederation settlement. But it is right that we of Western Canada should set high value upon the fine patriotism of these communities, and should know that we have not borne all the burdens or made all the sacrifices."

"It is our privilege also to remember that it was in these Provinces that the prophets of Confederation had their vision and whence the inspiring message to organisation and consolidation proceeded. Uniacke had the vision; Howe's was the compelling message. No greater man than Howe ever was born under Canadian skies, and however strangely and sadly his career may have ended in the day of his strength and his power he wrought mightily for civil freedom, for the enduring glory of the State, and for the perpetuation and extension of British sovereignty in North America."

Mr. Willison pointed out how much was sacrificed for the West, at first with disappointing results. "But the day was nearer than we knew, and the revival which at length has come upon this land has hardly a parallel in

history. We now have financial resources equal to an adequate national equipment, and a disposition to unify the material interests of the Confederation. Long ago the Intercolonial Railway should have been extended to the great lakes, and it is by no means clear that the construction of the new transcontinental road should obstruct or delay that practical and advantageous project. The West will send out an ever-increasing volume of produce, it will choke all the avenues of transportation and the national railway should be enabled to compete for business on equal terms with its competitors. This combined with the new transcontinental road would give to the East its rightful relation with the West, promote national solidity and unite all the Provinces in a common and natural bond of material interest. We may be sure that we have not reached the limit of achievement in rail transportation and if it is found possible by the national transcontinental road to carry the products of the West across the great unsettled tract between Quebec and Winnipeg, and thence out by Atlantic ports to old world markets and to establish continuous settlement between these coasts and the Western prairie, we shall have breadth as well as length and a material connection between the new settlements, the prairie population and the Maritime Provinces which must give solidity and stability to the whole national structure."

"It is inevitable that there shall be a revival of ship-building on these coasts, a steady growth of manufactures, a great increase of agricultural output, a flourishing mining industry, a rising revenue from more scientific management of the fisheries, and whatever may be our general attitude towards public subsidies it does seem that we should establish a fast line of steamships and develop this Atlantic route as the great highway for passenger traffic between Europe and America. If commercial advertising has its value, and the journalist who disputes that proposition passed through the bankruptcy court long ago, so national advertising has its value, and a position of dominance in the ocean-borne passenger traffic, would attract attention to this country as would no other expedient or achievement to which the Canadian Government can apply its resources and its constructive genius. Furthermore, whatever may have been the attitude of the East towards high tariff at Confederation, and during the early protectionist era it is the fact that great industries in this Province are now rooted in the system, and that if it has economic disabilities its compensatory advantages are not confined to Ontario and Quebec. It remains to be added that sooner or later this country must make reasonable provision for the protection of its sea-borne commerce and it will be the future of these Provinces to provide a naval militia. This, then, as it seems to me, is the position and outlook of the Maritime Provinces, and whatever may have been the expectations of the fathers, and however inadequate the early realisation, the skies are not so grey, the sun not so reluctant, the future not so uncertain. Never has the East been un-influential in determining public policy, and never unequal to any demand of national honour or of national duty."

### The Prairie Land

By LAURA E. MARSHALL

Would you feel the charm of the prairie land?  
Then stand at the break of dawn,  
Where the long, low sunrise floods with light  
The plains of Saskatchewan.