



# REFLECTIONS

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## THE SECRET OF OUR PROGRESS

EVERY Liberal paper in Canada is busily engaged in showing what wonderful progress Canada has made between 1896 and 1908. For the most part their statements are correct and justifiable. The progress has been indeed marvellous. No other country in the world can show a more favourable record. The only point in dispute is "What caused the Prosperity?" The Liberal press while not exactly claiming that this progress is all due to the Liberal Government which has been at the helm for twelve years, certainly aims to give the impression that the Liberals are entitled to considerable credit for this marvellous growth in trade, production and population. The Conservative press does not deny the progress, but contents itself with showing that in a time of rapidly expanding revenues, the Government has not been as economical as the essentials of good management demanded.

The proper explanation for this twelve-year expansion has not yet been given, so far as the writer is aware. The nearest approach to the truth is that the world's circumstances so influenced those in Canada that this country shared in the general prosperity of civilised mankind. There is a great deal in this explanation. The United States was prosperous and her prosperity was certain to affect ours. Her free farming lands were almost exhausted and the expansion of her progressive inhabitants was certain to drive a number of farmers northward. The Canadian Pacific Railway had been carrying on an immigration campaign in England between 1890 and 1896 which was destined to bring victory in due time. No matter what Government had been in power between 1896 and 1908, Canada would have witnessed an era of increasing population and expanding trade. Nevertheless it is true that if the Government of the day had not possessed men of imagination and daring like Sir William Mulock and Hon. Clifford Sifton and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, part of the world's prosperity might have flowed past our doors. British emigration might have gone to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The United States surplus might have trekked to Oklahoma and Texas, or remained at home to further develop Illinois, Wisconsin and the Dakotas. It is quite evident that these gentlemen were anxious to make a record for themselves, to show that they were the equals of the men who had ruled Canada from 1878 to 1896. They saw the possibilities and were adventurous enough to risk something to turn a large measure of public attention to this portion of the continent.

Yet this is not an adequate explanation. The most important reason for our prosperity is that *for the first time since Confederation, both parties have been working together in the national interest.* Before 1896, one was pulling against the other, with a resulting lack of confidence among the people. This extended even to the capitalists and large employers of labour. With a lack of confidence at home, there was necessarily a lack of appreciation abroad. Canada was being held back by internal political differences which were nationally disastrous. The Liberals had been so long excluded from the government of the country and from political honours and rewards, that they had soured. The Conservatives had been so long in power that they had accumulated a band of camp-followers who were keeping the Government busy with their greedy demands. In 1878, the Conservative party had inaugurated a policy of protection to native manufacturers which had made a tremendous difference in the character of Canadian activity. Owing, however, to that lack of capital which distinguishes all new countries, the progress was slow. Moreover, when one-half of the Canadian press and one-half of the Canadian people believed it good politics to decry the prosperity of the country, foreign capital instead of coming to Canada, went to the United States, South Africa and Australia. According to Sir Richard Cartwright, Prof. Goldwin Smith and the Liberal journalists, the country

would never be able to stand alone. The only way to develop it was to attach it to the United States for commercial purposes. Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec were but desert wastes, the great Northwest was a doubtful asset and British Columbia was too far away to ever interest the people along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. Oh, those were unhappy times!

At last the people of this country decided upon a course of action. The Conservative Government of the day was showing signs of weakness; the Liberals were showing signs of increasing pessimism concerning political and national affairs. The only possible change was to change the Government. This was done on June 23rd, 1896. The Party which was always boasting of Canada's prosperity was defeated at the polls and the "Blue-ruinists," as they were sarcastically called, were victorious.

In this connection, a quotation from "The Canadian Magazine" for August, 1896, (a few weeks after the General Election) bears out what has been said and at the same time contains a remarkable prophecy. The writer heads his article "All Our Enemies Dead," and closes his remarks by saying:

"The 'Blue-ruinists' are now no more. They have become the governing body and are now responsible for the prosperity of the country. Already the Liberal press is assuming a tone which indicates a feeling that after all this country is a fit place in which to live and grow wealthy. In another twelve months we may expect to see and hear paeans of praise from the members of this party.

"The Conservatives have for so long praised this country's position, her unlimited natural resources, her magnificent climate and her unequalled chances that they can not consistently become blue-ruinists. They must continue to boast of 'Canada, the home of the brave and the free.'

"In fact, it may truly be said that all our enemies have passed away."

This prophecy has been fulfilled. To-day, the Liberal press stands exactly where the Conservative press stood in 1896, while the latter has not greatly changed. In other words, both parties in Canada have been working together in the interests of national prosperity. There have been no "blue-ruinists" since 1896. This is the real reason of our prosperity. Even if the Liberals were again given the privilege of forming His Majesty's Loyal Opposition at Ottawa, they could not possibly revert to the "blue-ruin" period in their history. That chapter is closed. It is as well, however, that they should remember that the original optimists and prosperity-producers were found in the Conservative, not the Liberal, party.

## GREAT BRITAIN AND THE BALKANS

JUST when Great Britain was congratulating herself that British influence at Constantinople was again in the ascendancy, all sorts of dark rumours begin to circulate. King Edward and Sir Edward Grey were being congratulated upon that adroit and politic message by which King Edward warmly congratulated the Sultan "on the occasion of the first anniversary of your accession since the promulgation of the Constitution." Thus were the Sultan and the Young Turks coupled in the one congratulatory telegram. Great Britain and the Turks seemed to have reached a better understanding than has obtained since Mr. Gladstone's protests against the Bulgarian massacres. Theoretically Great Britain was unfriendly to Turkey because of the misgovernment in Bulgaria, Armenia and Macedonia. Practically, the result of the unfriendliness was to displease Britain's Mohammedan subjects, of whom there are about eighty millions in the Empire, and to leave German influence predominant at Constantinople. German officers drilled the Ottoman army and German