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Special Articles

- Jubilee of Canadian Confederation.
By Ernest M. Godfrey, F.S.S.
- The Cost of Hiring and Firing Men.
By J. W. Macmillan.
- Intensive Farming in Canada.
By W. W. Swanson, Ph.D.
- Conditions in the West.
By E. Cora Hind.
- Banking and Business Affairs in the U. S.
By Elmer H. Youngman.

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After Fifty Years

THE fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Canadian Confederation finds Canada with much to rejoice over, yet, in one important respect, in a situation which leaves no room for joy. In wealth, in population, in the enlargement of its bounds, in the development of its resources, in the successful construction of great lines of transportation, in the advance of its status as a portion of the British Empire, in the acceptance of the larger responsibilities arising from that higher status, in these and other respects the history of the half century warrants much pride and satisfaction to all citizens of the Dominion. But the end of the fifty years finds Canadians still facing a large problem—in a more than usually acute form—that Confederation was designed to solve.

There were men of large vision who had dreamt of measures to bring together all the British lands of the North American continent. That vision, no doubt, had some part in the Confederation movement of 1864-67; but, if the truth be told, it was chiefly the chaotic political condition of the old Province of Canada—the territory now known as Ontario and Quebec—that set on foot and pressed forward the movement which resulted in the passing, in the Imperial Parliament, of "The British North America Act, 1867." There had long been a friction, largely the product of racial difference, between Upper and Lower Canada. That friction became more than usually severe in the years immediately preceding the passing of the Confederation Act. The conflict of political parties was bitter; government by either of the two great parties had become almost impossible; the financial position of the Province was most unsatisfactory; the whole situation as respects the management of the public affairs of the Province of Canada was deplorable, disheartening. It was to lift old Canada out of this slough, and to end, if possible, the conflict of English and French that was believed to be the main cause of the trouble, that Confederation was proposed and ultimately carried.

To some extent the purpose was served. The racial difference, if never wholly absent, was for some years much less than before, and the best citizens began to entertain a hope that there would be a blending of Canadians of all races and creeds into a common citizenship. At the end of fifty years the fact must be sadly acknowledged that this pleasing expectation has not been realized, but that on the contrary, there has lately been a revival of racial differences, which are more marked at this moment than they were at any previous time in the history of the Dominion. An attempt to apportion to the several parties concerned the blame for this unhappy situation would be a hopeless task. On each side there would be an insistence that the fault lay entirely in the conduct of the others.

Perhaps it will be fairest to admit that there have been faults on both sides. It is well, however, that the situation as it exists to-day shall be frankly recognized by all, so that all may realize how important it is that every reasonable effort be made to prevent further friction and to draw together the various sections of these Canadian people, in whose co-operation in the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship lies the only hope of the building up of Canada as a nation within the Empire. He who by word or deed promotes this high purpose serves Canada and the Empire. He who by word or deed, whether deliberately or thoughtlessly, adds to the present discord, and thus broadens the lines of racial division, is doing great harm to the Dominion and to the Empire.

Reform of the House of Lords

WHEN Lord Curzon, in the House of Lords the other day, said the Government, in fulfilment of a long-standing promise, would take up the question of a reform of the House of Lords, there must have been smiles on the faces of the Liberal peers, for the section of the Government which Lord Curzon represents had never given any such promise, but on the contrary had been inclined to regard the House of Lords as an entirely satisfactory institution. When Mr. Asquith, having no doubt obtained the King's consent, intimated that if necessary to carry certain important measures of the Government, he would appoint a few score or more new peers, probably Lord Curzon and his friends began to see possibilities of the Lords becoming a less satisfactory body than it had been. Reform of the House of Lords was a part of the Liberal programme. If the Conservative members of the Coalition Government are now willing to make it a part of the Coalition programme, the fact indicates that the progressive spirit of the age is making itself felt in quarters that have hitherto been slow to receive it. Just what shape the proposed reform may take is not easily seen. It is more than likely, however, that there will be a division of the present Lords into two classes, that by some process of selection a number of the peers, whose services in such a capacity would be valuable, will be assigned to the duties of legislation and thus be one of the law-making authorities of the Empire, while the others, the great majority, will be left to the harmless possession of their titles. The House of Lords contains, on both sides, many men of high character, of great ability, and of large experience in the conduct of public affairs. It is much to be desired that any reform measure shall enable most of these men to continue to serve the Empire. If it pleases the others to wear empty titles, probably nobody will be hurt by allowing them to do so.