

[Written for the Review.]

OUR NATIONAL POLICY.

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Canada a few years ago a wilderness sparsely settled in but few localities, has since gone through several stages of national growth; first as a crown colony, and then with a certain amount of self-rule under a responsible government in detached provinces.

Four years ago, however, these provinces were united in a Confederation. We then took our first step on the ladder of national progression. Duties not formerly thought of were thrown upon us and responsibilities hitherto unknown became of pressing importance. Our statesmen should bear this in mind and should not forget the rapidity with which in modern times event follows event; more than ever is it necessary that they should look far into the future and prepare for whatever it may bring forth. Politicians who are guided more by present party exigencies than by the desire of laying the foundations of power for future generations are more than ever dangerous to the well-being of a State.

A young country most requires far-seeing Statesmen for it is in the youth of a people that the ground work of future greatness is established; as in the man the vigour of the system is the result of the strength imbibed into the constitution during the period of youth. Canada during the next twenty years is about to pass through the most important phase of its existence. During that time she will either be gaining the vigour and national spirit that will carry her triumphantly through the trials that may come upon her, or she will have implanted in her system those seeds of weakness which will cause her premature decay and rapid decline.

This generation has, therefore, a grave duty to perform. It will have to lay the foundation of a new nationality and it must do so on a sure and lasting basis if the structure is to endure. Discussions on this point are, therefore, at the present moment not only appropriate but necessary.

In considering this question we may therefore justly contemplate our present position and draw attention to the advantages the country possesses in commencing to build up a great nationality. No country ever set out on its career under such favorable auspices or had fewer drawbacks or difficulties to encounter. Canada is one of the most extensive territories in the world, compact, flanked on either side by two great oceans and safely backed by the frozen regions of the north. It is a fertile country, rich in agricultural products. It has mines, fisheries, water powers, and great stretches of inland navigation, and what is more to be prized than all, a vast territory where a waggon can be driven for twelve hundred miles across a boundless prairie

open for settlement where there are no old world customs to respect, no traditions of a dead past to clog the wheel of modern progress and advancement, no vested rights to interfere with the onward march of our race, but all clear and open and free where our Statesmen, drawing experience from the past, can build solidly and surely the foundations upon which the great future of our country shall be firmly established.

Canadian Statesmen have another advantage not possessed by the founders of any other nationality in the world's history; side by side with us, on the same continent under somewhat a similar climate, a great nation sprung from the same race, peopled from like sources, and speaking a common language have established themselves. The United States have been experimenting in front of us. It will be our own fault if the manifest lessons taught by their experiences should fall dead upon our ears, or if we should shut our eyes to the warning conveyed by their failures.

They have shown us, and our people appreciate the fact, that although in theory the Republican form of government may seem a good one, there are, nevertheless, grave difficulties in the practical working of the idea which the United States have clearly been unable to overcome. They have shown us that excess of liberty means license. They have taught us that the true secret of government is to draw the line where liberty ends and license begins. They have experimented in the elective system to the fullest extent. They have elective sheriffs, district attorneys, and even judges; and they have adopted the system of changing all office-bearers on every change of government. The practical results of all these experiments are such as are not likely to induce us to imitate them.

While we find much to avoid in their institutions, there are some points upon which we can follow their example with great advantage, and on no one point more than in the encouragement of a national sentiment. The founders of the neighboring Republic knew the necessity of inculcating in the citizen not only a love of country, but a confidence in it, in themselves, and in each other. They wisely commenced at the right place in the education of the children. Every effort was made, every measure taken to encourage a national feeling. Their school geographies conveyed the idea to the children that the world consisted mainly of the United States and Territories; the other countries being referred to so as to set off, as much as possible, the existence, grandeur and importance of the great Republic. Their history were equally marked by this spirit. Histories with them virtually commenced with Pocahontas saving Captain John Smith's life, and culminated in the Declaration of Independence, and the battles of Trenton, Princeton, and Yorktown. The war of 1812 was chronicled in order to place on

record several naval duels (generally illustrated) in which British ships were captured, and to mark the victory of New Orleans. Modern history was practically summed up in glowing accounts of the Mexican War.

There is no doubt they carried this principle to excess. An instance worth mentioning lately came under the writer's observation which shows the absurd lengths to which the Yankees will go in pandering to their vanity. A panorama for the entertainment of children has been lately exhibited in which, among other scenes there is a representation of Moses and the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea with the stars and stripes waving boldly at the head of the column.

The citizen of the United States partakes a good deal of the Chinese idea that his own country comprises all the world or nearly all of it and could easily whip it. We may laugh at all this, we may ridicule their school books and their ideas of their strength, but, nevertheless, their success in the late civil wars can be attributed mainly to this unbounded confidence in themselves. No defeat however complete ever seemed to shake their confidence for an instant, and they continually hammered away until they succeeded.

In the Pogram Defiance which "defied the world in general to compete with our country upon any hook and developed our internal resources for making war upon the universal faith." Charles Dickens merely satirized the general sentiment of the masses in the States, a sentiment the result of the school books and school education.

Until lately Canada has been acting in the very opposite extreme, and blameably so. For years in the public schools Yankee books were used teaching the children history so-called in masquerade, in which abuse of England was unstinted and nothing but her failures and defeats chronicled. The geographies were quite as bad.

It is gratifying to know that although we have not gone quite so far as our neighbours, yet a few years ago the educational Department followed their example to a certain extent; and now all the common schools are supplied with geographies, histories, and readers compiled from a Canadian point of view. The new books are already beginning to impart a tone to the public sentiment of the people. The late Fenian Raids and the different marchings to the frontier of our volunteers, the recent insurrection at Red River and the expedition to put it down have given a great impetus to Canadian national feeling. This is a matter to which every attention should be paid, every encouragement given, for upon the training of the youth the spirit of the nation will depend in the future.

In this country the State educates the children at the public expense, and the children owe something in return to the State. It would be a reasonable and feasible idea