

INTRODUCTION.

THE first issue of THE CANADIAN ALMANAC was published in the year 1847, by Scobie & Balfour, Toronto. It contained 104 pages, and according to advertisement on the title page, was sold for 7½d. or 5s. per doz. The next year the ALMANAC only contained 88 pages, some of the information given in the first issue being dropped. In 1850 the size was still further reduced to 80 pages, but since then the contents have steadily been increased, and the ALMANAC for 1897 contains 354 pages.

It is with some little pride that the publishers point to an unbroken history of fifty years of progress. And every Canadian should take pride in the history of our country from 1847 to 1897. It is the fashion some times to talk of Canada as unprogressive and slow. No doubt Canada has shared in the world-wide depression of the past decade, but if we look back fifty years, which is but a moment in a nation's life, we will see how great has been the development of our country, and find much reason to thank God and take courage.

In 1847 there was no Grand Trunk Railway, it was not commenced until 1852, while as for the Canadian Pacific Railway it was not even dreamed of. The Great North West was thought to be a barren wilderness, useful only as a hunting ground for the fur trade.

In 1848 the St. Lawrence canals were opened for navigation, and in 1850 work was begun on the Northern Railway, which was opened for traffic from Toronto to Bradford on 13th July, 1853, this being the first locomotive railway in Upper Canada. In 1895 there were 15,977 miles of railway in operation in Canada, a growth in 42 years that is simply marvellous. Turning now to the question of population, we find that in 1851 the population of Upper Canada was 952,004; Lower Canada, 890,261; New Brunswick, 193,800, and Nova Scotia, 276,354, making a total of 2,312,419. The population of the Dominion in 1891 was 5,034,650, and we have reason to believe that it is much larger now.

In 1851 the Postal system was transferred from the British Government to the Provincial Government. The use of postage stamps was introduced, the rate being 3 pence per ½ oz. It was not until the year 1858 that the decimal system of currency was adopted.

Many other evidences of progress can be gleaned from a fyle of the CANADIAN ALMANAC, and much encouragement for the future. We have a country of great resources, a healthy climate, a law-respecting people, and the freest government under the sun.

With reference to the future, the publishers desire to improve and enlarge the ALMANAC each year, and are glad to receive suggestions from their correspondents to that end. Great effort is made to have all the information given accurate. Whenever possible, official records are used, but in spite of every care errors will sometimes creep in. If our subscribers will advise us of any inaccuracy it will be corrected in the next issue.

The Editor wishes to give his hearty thanks to the many friends throughout the Dominion who have so kindly assisted in revising the information from year to year, and to all correspondents as well as all readers of this book, Publishers and Editor unite in wishing a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Toronto, November, 1896.