

From Wampum to King's Gold

Address by H. S. Seaman, of Clare Bros. Western, Ltd., before the members of the Winnipeg Division, at the Fort Garry Hotel, on Thursday, 22nd March, 1917

Heritage of Britons

It may probably be said that every one of us in this room are British citizens by birth, and most of you within a half century. Every one of you will admit that to grow up within the bounds and amid the privileges of Britons is to lack, at least in some measure, in appreciation of the wide range of benefits and enjoyments to which we have been heirs, without stopping very often to think how much we have to be thankful to our forefathers for.

Perhaps it would be hard to find a more apt illustration than to relate an incident in which Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and Col. Robt. G. Ingersoll were the principals. Beecher dropped into a seat in a railway coach one day beside Ingersoll, and the two were soon discussing the topics of the day. After a time Beecher referred to a large parcel he had with him, and started to unwrap it. It proved to be a beautiful globe map of the world, very accurately and handsomely executed. Ingersoll was all admiration, and presently exclaimed: "Who made it?" "Oh, no one made it; it just happened," was Beecher's reply. Ingersoll was so taken aback that he left the seat and the car. This is about the attitude we sometimes assume towards the benefits, the privileges, the institutions by which we are surrounded. They are here, and as far as we care they may always have been here. We enjoy them for the same reason that those who were before us enjoyed them. But this is not a true analysis of the situation. Many of the privileges, benefits and institutions around us today are the results secured often through great hardships and as the outcome of determined effort and prolonged agitation on the part of those who bequeathed them to us.

Among the most common institutions in our possession today is our means of doing our trading.

Our Medium of Exchange

How did it arrive? Whence did it come?

To appreciate the convenience by which our trading is done today, we shall have to look back upon other days and the methods and means used in former times.

Canada is often spoken of as the newest of the nations; this is partly, but only partly, true. If we are going to define Canada as that guerdon of provinces reaching from coast to coast across this broad continent at its broadest part, then Canada is the newest of nations. In that sense, Canada had no existence fifty years ago today, for we still lack more than three months of reaching our semi-centennial of the Confederation of four great provinces, while it was only on September 1st, 1905, that the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were inaugurated, and only on May 15th, 1912, were the boundaries of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba extended, by which the latter graduated from its aforesaid dimensions, when it was known as the postage stamp province.

In another and a deeper sense, Canada as a united body politic, as contrasted with the many and varied provincialisms of even fifty years ago, is a brand new nation. It has taken two wars of the Empire to fuse the Canada that is from the elements that existed one hundred or even fifty years ago, while at the same time the process was at work in that larger sense by which the Empire is being crystallized as never before.

In all this Canada is the newest of the nations, but there are other methods by which to measure Canada's age.

Cabot's landfall, somewhere at the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, June 24th, 1497. The edict of Louis XII. of France, by which the territory in what is now Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island was given a Governor from Europe, was dated June 15th, 1540. The name of *Stadacona* was changed to *Quebec* by Samuel de Champlain on July 3rd, 1608, and Hendric Hudson anchored at the bottom of the bay which will, as long as the world lasts, keep his name on the lips of men, on November 1st, 1610. Landmarks, more enduring than the flag poles erected by the men who were first at such outposts as these, but now in all stages of decay and ruin, mark the sites of the early work of the governor, the missionary, the explorer and the trader of some