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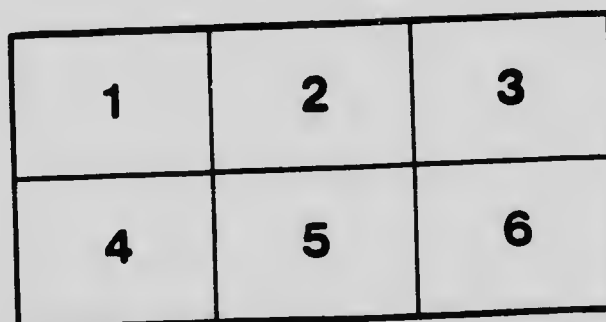
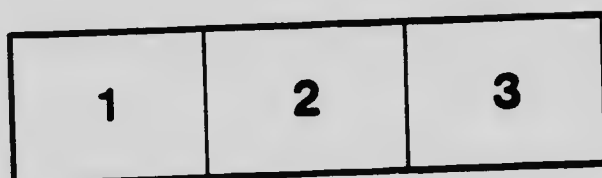
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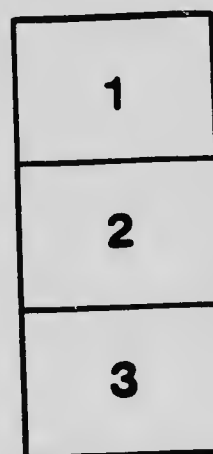
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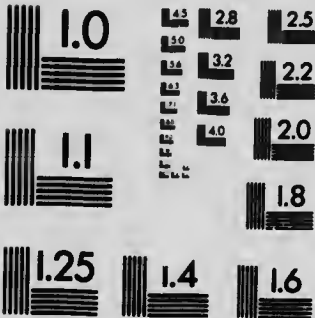
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# **THE GROWTH OF CANADIAN NATIONAL FEELING**

BY  
**CLARANCE M. WARNER**



**President's Address at the Annual Meeting of the  
Ontario Historical Society, June 2nd, 1915.**

**GRIFFIN & RICHMOND CO., Ltd., PRINTERS**  
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# THE GROWTH OF CANADIAN NATIONAL FEELING

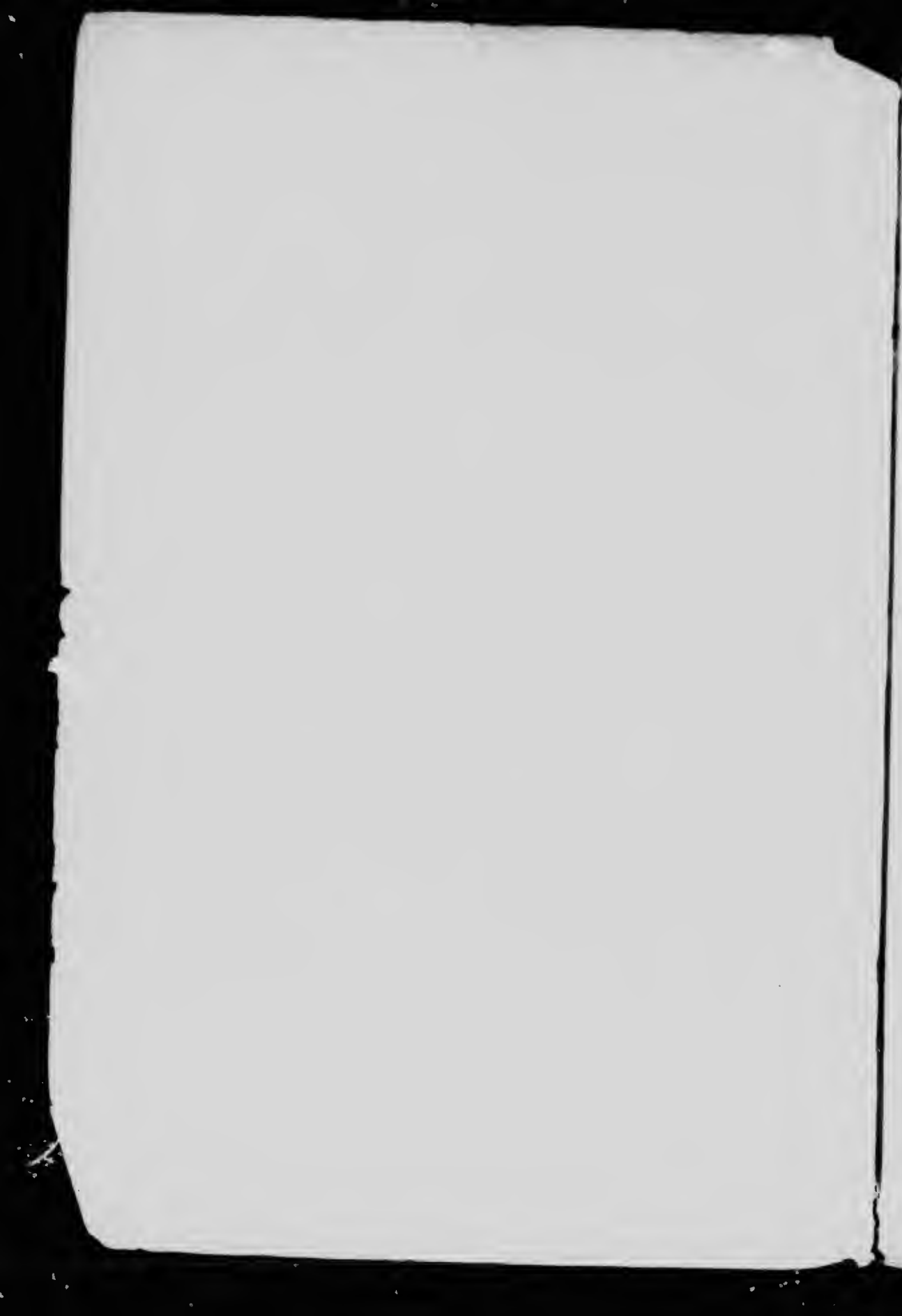
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## THE GROWTH OF CANADIAN NATIONAL FEELING.

BY CLARENCE M. WARNER

Prior to Confederation there was, in the hearts of the settlers throughout the various parts of what is now the Dominion of Canada, a certain local feeling of pride that they had been able to overcome the forests and establish themselves in the wilderness, that they or their fathers had successfully resisted a foreign enemy and that their country was gradually developing in commercial importance. This feeling was, however, distinctly local in its character and Nova Scotia cared very little about the progress in Upper Canada, and Upper Canada took an interest in British Columbia only during the occasional fever of a gold rush. The Province of Quebec might well have been considered as a unit entirely foreign to the other settled districts. True, there was in the individual provinces, and especially among the French and United Empire Loyalists, a certain feeling of attachment for the home province, but that was practically all. In fact, it may be stated that the various settlements had shown so much self-assertiveness that the years leading up to Confederation produced absolutely no national feeling. By the term "national feeling" I do not mean "patriotism."

With Confederation an accomplished fact, the situation changed materially. It certainly created a new feeling, but one still far removed and of an entirely different cast from that which has existed among Canadians for the past fifteen years.

The Provinces united in 1867 had existed as distinct units and each citizen—the Nova Scotian, the native of New Brunswick, the Lower Canadian and the Upper Canadian—quite naturally looked after the interests of his own Province, but the vast majority of these people, and particularly those in the English speaking provinces, could not forget the land of their fathers, the land from which they emigrated, and it took many years to transfer even a small part of their love to the land of their adoption. It was hard for them to realize that this was to be the native land of their children and their children's children, and that it was their duty to cultivate a love of their new home in order that the sentiment of nationality might be fostered in the next generation.

Distances were great, and modes of communication very crude. Many great changes in economic conditions took place, each of which had its effect upon the scattered population of the Dominion. Going back to the days before Confederation, we find that the last Canadian



ta. . . made in England was on September 8th, 1842, and, at the time of Confederation, that the British North America Act gave the Colony the right to manage and regulate its own customs, trade and navigation.

The charter of the Hudson Bay Company had expired and the Crown temporarily held these great fertile plains waiting for such time as the Canadians should be ready to open them for settlement.

The Rebellion Losses Bill of 1849 created the last Annexation impulse that Canada was to have, and since that time there has never been any definite sentiment in favor of such a movement. There was some agitation about it from 1837 to 1891, but the talking was done by comparatively few and their ideas were not popularly received.

Confederation followed quite as a natural development, but it took years before the bitter political rivals like Macdonald and Brown could join forces and work out the details of that great movement.

After the provinces were joined many weighty problems had to be solved and it was fortunate that the young nation had able men to work out her destinies.

The withdrawal of the last regular British troops from Canada in 1870, except for the few which were left on request of the Canadian authorities for purposes of instruction, made thinking men more clearly understand that a real nation had started on its journey. This tended to establish self-confidence.

The Macdonald years may properly be called the developing years in Canadian history, and Macdonald's was no light task—to make a homogeneous people out of the mixture with which he had to deal. Geographical contact was not found to be binding when the disparities of race or creed were present and it required skillful manipulation to bring the factions together and form a unit. He had a composite people to handle. A combination of Pennsylvania and New York Dutch, Highland Scotch, old Normans and Bretons and Tentons made up the eastern part of the country. The middle west contained many French and Scotch half-breeds, while on the Pacific slope there were English, Scotch, Irish and Canadians, and not by any means a high grade assortment of these. However, the task of fusing these great elements had to be performed, and, aided by well chosen economic and immigration policies, the vast country gradually came to feel that it was really united for more purposes than that of administration.

Probably the two most potent influences in bringing Canada to her present state of concord have been her policies of immigration and of encouraging railroad enterprise. The fact that the two great political parties in the country equally divide the honors of legislation in aid of these policies no doubt shows that their importance has always been recognized by the thinking men of the country. It was nearly twenty years after Confederation that the first great continental railway system was completed and we were in a position to ask the foreigner to come to our western plains.

What did these people who occupied our country in the eighties really think of the question of Canadian national feeling, or did they think of it at all? My conclusions, after reading many articles written at that time, are that there were a few rather rare cases where individuals had this feeling but that the vast majority of the people did not take the trouble to think seriously on the subject. This is by no means a condemnation. In those days we thought of ourselves, and all the world thought of us, as a "colony." The Canadian travelling in Britain was thought of as a "mere colonial," and although this was not intended as derogatory, it is just possible that some visitors, being over sensitive, felt that they were not treated with a proper degree of respect. The emigrants who came to our country and found homes were usually more anxious to be considered as English, Irish and Scotch than as Canadians. What else could be expected when our tremendous immigration is considered—an immigration which in several years has amounted annually to a total of four per cent. of our population? Rarely did we find one, who when asked his country, would reply with the real spirit of self-gratulation, "I am a Canadian."

In many parts of the New England States, Canadians were always thought of as French and frequently surprise was expressed when people in that country found that all Canadians did not speak the French language. Many of our best young men, particularly those of Ontario, left Canada to make new homes in the United States, and one has but to contrast their attitude after three or four years residence in their adopted country, with the attitude of new settlers in Canada, to understand the difference in national feeling.

We also had a spirit of sectionalism to combat. A good example had not been set for the Lower Canadians. As long as we had English, Irish and Scotch in Canada the Lower Canadians considered themselves as the true "Canadien," but when the English, Irish and Scotch became Canadian, the French recognized the broader national feeling and were one with us. Canada may truly be considered as the American Switzerland with language but a surface mark on the rock. In contrast with the Upper Canadians the Lower Canadians have long had many of the marks of a real nation. There were but eight thousand of them in 1673 but their descendants have so increased in numbers that the vast majority of the two millions who occupy that Province to-day can trace their lineage to the original band. They are wonderfully homogeneous and love the land they dwell on. This ancestral love for their homes is marked and they are free from the almost nomadic life of the Upper Canadian. No one living in Canada could fail to understand what a difference this spirit has made in attempts to blend the French with the Anglo-Saxon in Canada.

The books which were written about our country by outsiders did not tend to increase accurate information as to the real conditions here. When they were not descriptive of the frozen north they usually portrayed scenes in frontier life or historic features from Quebec which were far from emphasizing the true type of Canadian. Is it strange, then, that

the average Englishman had little conception of what Canada really was—that he thought he could have breakfast in Halifax and dine in Toronto—or that we were really beginning the construction of a new nation with real feeling and actually had some national sentiments? Very little was written about Canada by Canadians. We produced a few writers whose works were well received by the English reading public, but we had told that public little of our country.

The truth of the matter is that we had absolutely no Canadian national feeling. We had not learned the lesson of manhood. Our citizens were not awakened to a realization of their possibilities. Perhaps they were thinking too much about building their homes, their churches, their schools and getting their country into shape by the construction of highways and railroads. In this new and vast country there were many problems with which to contend. True we had the splendid example set by the United States in opening up and settling her west, and we did copy many of their modes, but our country did not have the great volume of free advertising in the European countries with surplus populations to dispose of, which was enjoyed by our neighbors to the south, and it was more difficult to get the desirable emigrants to come here.

Our population, though small and made up of many units of vastly different interests and affiliations, was one which combined three grand qualifications. Almost all the people in the country were tenacious, thrifty and self-assertive, and the climate in which they lived tended to develop these virtues, with the result that the new comers felt the influence and gradually became possessed of the same qualities. The old illustration of the Italian, Hungarian, English and North German immigrants may well be cited to illustrate the point. These four absolutely distinct types, with their prejudices and racial characteristics, came to Canada to found new homes. To-day it is hard to tell their grandsons apart by their "speech, their habits, their customs or their ideals."

Thus we find Canada approaching the twentieth century as a vast self-governing British Colony, little known to the outside world, with over a million of her sons living in the United States because they more readily found great opportunities for advancement in that country, with a home population of about five millions, but with a knowledge gradually making itself felt in that population that great things were in store for them and their country. We had the foundations, broad and firm, set for a national edifice which we were all anxious to construct and which we wished to be constructed with prudence and tolerance, and we wished the whole to be cemented by "good-will, benevolence and a truly national spirit." We had grown from "the wobbling gait of childhood" and thoroughly believed in our country, but how best to develop it with a truly national feeling was a problem.

There were natural difficulties to overcome which were new in nation-building. The geographical tenuity of the country did not encourage unity. The length without breadth, with the middle part relatively barren, and the separation of British Columbia from the rest of Canada

by the mountains, and the peculiarity of its climate and Pacific interests, required that measures be taken to counteract these natural barriers. Doubt might have been expressed as to how far civilization could head towards the north.

About this time several things happened which had a great influence in shaping our course. First the election of 1896 when the Liberal party came into power with a brilliant leader at its head, and that leader a Frenchman. Not that this change meant so much in the National Policy of the Government, because the Liberals immediately adopted the essential features of this policy, but it showed the younger and more progressive of the people that things could be changed and that a change after so many years of rule by one party was beneficial. There was another thing the change of government brought about which was most essential—it unquestionably started a broad industrial development which, as the years went on, tended to keep Canada's people employed within her own boundaries. And when our people commenced to find opportunities at home they understood better what vast possibilities for nation building lay at their own doors. By this time the Canadian West had begun to feel the urgent need of more men to till the soil. After the Canadian Pacific was built many of the younger generation from the Eastern Provinces went west to make new homes. The railway found it necessary to build many feeders for its system. Then came advertisement and, encouraged by healthy support from the Government, it was not long before the opportunities of that country became known to the great emigrating centres of Europe. The west began to fill up. The new settlers locating beside the sons of Eastern Canada had a good influence. While each was in a new country with the same object in view, the national feeling shown by the foreigner for his home land and people made the native Canadian think seriously on the subject. His pride was stirred and it was not long before he, too, began to praise his home in as strong language as his new neighbor. This gradually roused both foreigner and native born and the beginning of a united Canadian feeling was made.

About this time, and probably inspired by the impetus given settlement and development of the west, men began to write about Canada and the wonderful opportunities the country offered for the investment of capital. Books and magazine articles made their appearance in great numbers, so much so that a guide to this material was required to aid the student and librarian. In 1897 appeared the first volume of that splendid "Annual Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada" under the able editorship of Professors Wrong and Langton. That this Review has appeared annually since that time, and that the material for review has increased in bulk, is one proof that our authors have kept pace with the financiers.

In 1899 an Historical Exhibition was held at Victoria College, Toronto, which attracted much attention and brought to the minds of the people the history of their country as nothing else could. This was only one of the many signs that Canada was gradually awakening to a sense of her real place in the world.

The country was unquestionably beginning to find herself, and it required only the opportunity to show herself to the world and to demonstrate her claim to possess international status to make her a nation—a nation whose people would with one voice declare themselves Canadians.

That opportunity presented itself in the South African War. That event did more to give Canadians a feeling of pride in their native land than any which had preceded it. Until that time, as has been stated, there was a certain feeling of new Canadianism gradually growing with the people; but uppermost, and particularly among the older citizens, was the reverence for the land of their nativity. This was the first time that the Mother land had treated the Colony as a partner, and Canada welcomed the opportunity of playing the partnership role. The fact that she sent contingents of soldiers to help maintain British supremacy on another continent, and did so of her own volition, and that Britain accepted the aid in the partnership spirit, did much to build up national pride and feeling among Canadians. Those contingents fought bravely as all British soldiers have done for generations, and the Canadians at home read with great pride the results of the battles in which their brothers were engaged. The dispatch of those contingents established a precedent for the dispatch of other contingents when the people of Canada similarly demand such action. The whole affair added to our national wealth for it supplied us with glorious annals by adding pages of heroism.

After the Boer war was over what influence strengthened this new national feeling, and why is it so strong to-day? There are unquestionably many causes. First should be mentioned the growth of national prosperity. The years following the South African war saw a growth in population and wealth in our country that had never been equalled in our history. Cities sprang up in our west and flourished; our railroads expanded, in some cases double-tracked, and their revenues were wonderfully increased; our banks grew in number and wealth; our manufacturing enterprises multiplied and our farmers were equally successful. An optimism born of fifteen years of steady national development now permeates the whole country. Everyone says, "The twentieth century belongs to Canada."

Another cause for this growth in national feeling is the attitude of other countries toward us and our position with regard to the United States. Canada has certainly developed more confidence in herself and this has been particularly marked in her relations with the neighbor to the south. In some respects we have shown an increasing desire to be unlike the United States. We have been evolving our own type and have paid little attention to that of others. The national and independent spirit displayed by Americans and their pride in their country have unquestionably made us feel that we were lacking in these respects and have tended to develop a new feeling in Canada. The recognition, first by foreign countries and then by ourselves, of our great institutions, our banks and our railroads, has added to that pride. The rejection of the Reciprocity Agreement in 1911 was a striking example of this feeling for

other countries. That verdict was not intended to show any unfriendly feeling toward the United States, but indicated merely that Canadians viewed the Agreement from their standpoint as Canadians and that they had set to work to develop more or less independently.

Our relations with the Mother Country should certainly be considered in searching for causes for the development of our national feeling. In a recent magazine article addressed to Canadians, a writer speaks in favor of what he calls "Historic Continuity," though he says that this expression does not convey much meaning to the average Canadian-born man or woman because we have little appreciation of what it involves. He argues that the British who come to Canada should hold to the continuity with the home-land. What does he expect the other nationalities to do when they come here? What does he expect from Canadian-born children? Does he think we have never read those wonderful lines of Scott with the same deep feeling which they have inspired in millions of other peoples?

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead  
Who never to himself hath said,  
'This is my own, my native land'."

This writer has, I fear, missed the whole grand scheme of the British Empire. With us it is not a question of loyalty to Great Britain. This has never been questioned in the home land or in Canada. There is a sincere affection for Great Britain throughout the whole of our Dominion which will probably never be changed, and in every national crisis involving her interests, Canada's sacrifices are the best evidence of her attachment. What we wish to note is the attitude England has taken in dealing with Canada and how our country has received the advances which have been made. It is not many years ago that the Englishman came to teach us, now he comes to learn; in those days he came to find fault, now he comes to admire; he came to criticize, and now he comes to sympathize. The great statesmen of England no longer look upon us as a colony but as a part of Britain. By a gradual evolution we became a self-governing nation, and the Englishmen in their present estimates put us upon an equal footing with themselves. At the Imperial Conference held in London in 1911, in discussing the Declaration of London, the British Government agreed "to inform and consult the Dominions in future in regard to all Hague Conventions and 'other international agreements affecting the Dominion'," and Great Britain has promised that at the end of the present war the Dominions shall be consulted about the terms of peace. The establishment by the United States, France, Germany and Italy, through their consul-generals in Canada, and with the approval of the Home government, of quasi-diplomatic, although not officially recognized, channels for direct communication with the Laurier Administration, made Ottawa the place for settling questions arising with these countries in place of London, and was another factor in developing Canadian national feeling. Unquestionably there has grown up a feeling of partnership between England and Canada, and the feeling has been fostered very materially by the English, Irish and Scotch who came to Canada, as immigrants, twenty or more years ago and who have

prospered in their adopted country. While retaining a feeling of affection for the old home, they have unconsciously warmed to Canada. Many of these men with their new found wealth have journeyed to the old land after years away from it, expecting to find the old home as their memories had carried it, but were disappointed that it was so small. Perhaps they had told their families how large and imposing it was. The home had not changed, but in Canada they had grown. When they came back to us they were better for the experience, and we were better because they inspired us with a stronger love for our own land. It is a source of gratification to Canadians to see so much space given to their country in "The Times," while twenty-five years ago they were pleased to find a single paragraph. There is no question that Canada and Great Britain are more substantially one in outlook than at any previous period in their history, and this is bound to strengthen our national feeling.

Our ever increasing trade has been another developer of the national feeling. We are now dealing with all the nations of the earth and we are buying from and selling to these countries direct, while in former years a great many of the trades were made through England. The large trading companies have established branches in our commercial centres. These have located representatives of foreign nations with us, and a more independent and broader spirit has manifested itself. That we can do these things has given us a different feeling about our country.

There has also been in evidence a spirit of pride in our great men who have gone out into the world and made names for themselves—our inventors, our engineers and our railroad men. When we read of the first telephone communication across the continent with the Canadian as the original inventor of the system, speaking to his assistant, another Canadian, we think more kindly of our land. This feeling naturally reflects on our sons in the United States and makes them proud of their home people.

That Canadian securities have been listed in foreign exchanges and are actively traded in, and that we in recent years have been able to buy back many of our own securities which were sold when we were not so well off financially, has undoubtedly had its effect. All this trading has made us travel more, and has broadened our vision. We have come to appreciate the fact that we enjoy many advantages and that after all Canada has kept pace with other countries in matters affecting the comforts of life. When the Canadian stands in one of the great terminals at New York or Chicago waiting for his train for home, he finds that his "Canadian" or "International Limited" or "Black Diamond" is as sumptuous in its equipment as any of the others, and he is pleased.

The great educational institutions which have been built and are building have unquestionably had a tremendous influence on Canadian manhood and national feeling. The so-called college spirit has shown remarkable development in the last fifteen years. It has been and is a great force to strengthen and stimulate us. The young men who graduate from our universities go out with a feeling that their alma mater has truly been a kindly mother to them, who has given them more than money



can ever repay and they are appreciatively loyal. To-day, as a result of the efforts of these men, trade, art, industry, science and all the other enterprises are unceasingly at work, and everywhere is visible great progress. The universities have broadened. Exchange professors are lecturing in most of our Canadian universities, and the newer parts of the country are building their institutions on broad lines. Canada has demanded and rightly received a contribution of well-equipped and strong-souled men from her educational institutions. With what degree of national feeling the Canadian tells the world that we have in our midst the largest university, in point of attendance, in the British Empire, can best be judged by the one who hears this remark made.

This university work has also developed a younger set of writers and has had a great influence upon the press of the land. Our libraries have grown and the collections of Canadiana in them are more often consulted than in former days. We were fortunate in having a few brilliant writers when the new feeling first asserted itself, and this list has steadily increased until we have been able to put out a set of books, covering our own history and written by our own men, of which any country might well feel proud. Our newspapers, too, have attained a higher standard. True, there are individual cases where the editorship of journals has not improved, but these examples are rare. The increase in numbers of really great newspapers published from one end of our country to the other reflects our national spirit in its true light.

Canadian Clubs, Historical Societies and other institutions of like kind, are undoubtedly the result of a demand by the citizens for opportunities of publicly expressing their views on this question, but they have also been great factors in building up the national feeling. I would specially emphasize the wonderful growth and development of Canadian Clubs and the work which they have done, particularly in raising the business men throughout the whole Dominion out of ordinary competitive selfishness. The public addresses which have been delivered by our learned men to Canadian Clubs in this country and in the United States have kindled a feeling the strength of which it is difficult to estimate. They have given us opportunities to discuss these questions with our neighbors to the south in a friendly manner. Our great speaker, Sir George Foster, told the Canadian Club in New York in 1909 that the old Canada which the members had left behind years before was a new country made by Canadian energy, brawn, enterprise, hope and resource. He said, "There is a lamp at the window always kept burning; there is a latch string always hanging outside; and the old Canadian home, whenever you choose to come to it, will always give you a warm welcome indeed." When that address was flashed over the wires, it appeared in our papers from one end of the land to the other and was heartily applauded by all.

Another influence which these organizations have had has been to increase our respect for the flag. The Historical Societies in particular have worked to that end. The fact that the national flag now flies upon post offices and custom house buildings throughout the whole country is indirectly due to their influence, and it has been of benefit to inspire the younger generation with proper national feeling.



More than any other event the present terrible struggle in Europe has probably shown to the world in clearer light the great change which has come over Canadians. Our wish to aid the Mother land at this time has been spontaneous. As soon as the machinery to handle large bodies of men could be put in readiness our men commenced to move and they are continuing to move and will continue to move until the Allies have won the victory. One should study the forces at work in the Canadian mind to appreciate what that means. We were making great progress along material lines. Our great industries were turning every wheel; our railroads were adding new mileage and new equipment to handle an ever increasing business, and all along economic lines we were busy. Then the word came that Britain was at war with the greatest fighting machine that the world has ever known. We immediately gave our best thought and work in an endeavor to make our share in the burden. Our men enlisted, our counties raised large amounts towards patriotic funds, our Provinces gave of their products, our Government assumed liabilities and our women have worked with a devotion and patriotism which should inspire a reverence for them throughout the world. While all this was going on—this great shock to our usual quiet life—our great financiers kept their heads. When the war is over, the fact that we, a new country and a great borrower of money, were able to successfully pass through the financial uncertainty and unrest without a panic and without a financial crash, will stamp us as a nation. Does anyone imagine that without being united by the strongest ties in national feeling we could accomplish so much? Have we not in this great crisis shown ourselves as a unit? When the history of our part in this great war is written, it is my belief that the historian will be able to use the words of our Premier, Sir Robert Borden, when he said, "One cannot but perceive an awakened national spirit and consciousness in this Dominion. . . . . When the day came that searched their spirit, Canadians did not fail to remember that there is something greater than material prosperity, and something greater than life itself."

Yes! Canada has developed a strong national feeling. True, we should not forget that in many ways we are still unformed. There is so much that is new and uncivilized in our national life, and it is lamentable that the Westerner and the Easterner know so little of each other and of each other's problems. Notwithstanding these omissions—these gaps in the continuity of our development—we have evidences of the national feeling wherever we turn. It is shown in the power of our public schools to foster the Canadian idea—of assimilating the children of recent arrivals. It is shown in our Universities, in our social life, in our economic progress and in our people—people who in their mature judgment realize that they have a part to play in international politics, and who play it with courtesy and discretion.

The stranger travelling across Canada in a railway train cannot but feel that the idea of nationality is everywhere in evidence.

Our citizens, living in all parts of the country, have a stronger feeling of pride in Canada. Our men of letters write more of their own land, and the demand for Canadiana is ever on the increase. Our travel-

lers abroad are prouder to be known as Canadians. Learned societies of other countries recognize our national spirit and pay us more attention. Our great west is coming to its own, and the settlers there take a keener interest in their native land. For many years we have led a charmed life and one great result has been to give us confidence in ourselves. The sense of uncertainty has disappeared and a strong Canadian ideal has taken its place.

All parties, races and creeds in Canada agree that there has been a rapid growth of Canadian national feeling during the last fifteen years. But Kipling's great line, "Daughter am I in my mother's house, but mistress in my own," does not express the true epitome of Canadian spirit at this time. That was applicable to us when the South African War was in progress. We are now full partners in the great firm of "John Bull and Co.", and as the American branch of that house we shall probably conduct this end of the business in the manner deemed advisable by the Canadian directors of the firm. Conditions—economic and social—are bound at times to make our point of view different from that of the senior partners, but we will all have the same object in view and Canadian nationalism will never break with Britain. Our history is decisive proof that Home Rule is the truest form of Empire, and we have come to recognize that there is something more important than material prosperity.

CLARANCE M. WARNER.

Napanee, Ontario, June 2, 1915.

