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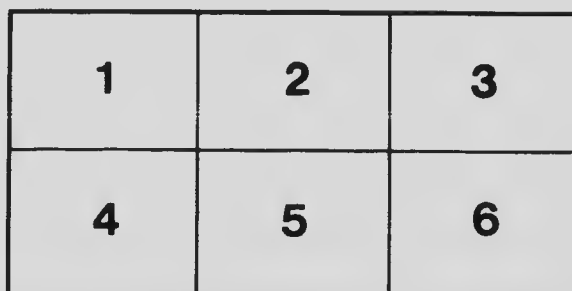
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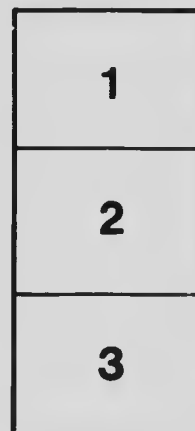
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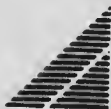
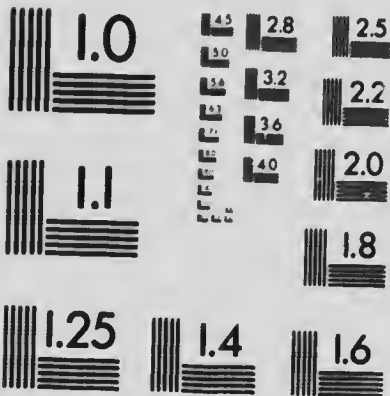
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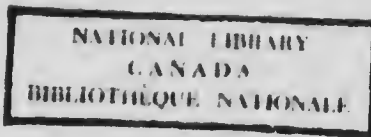
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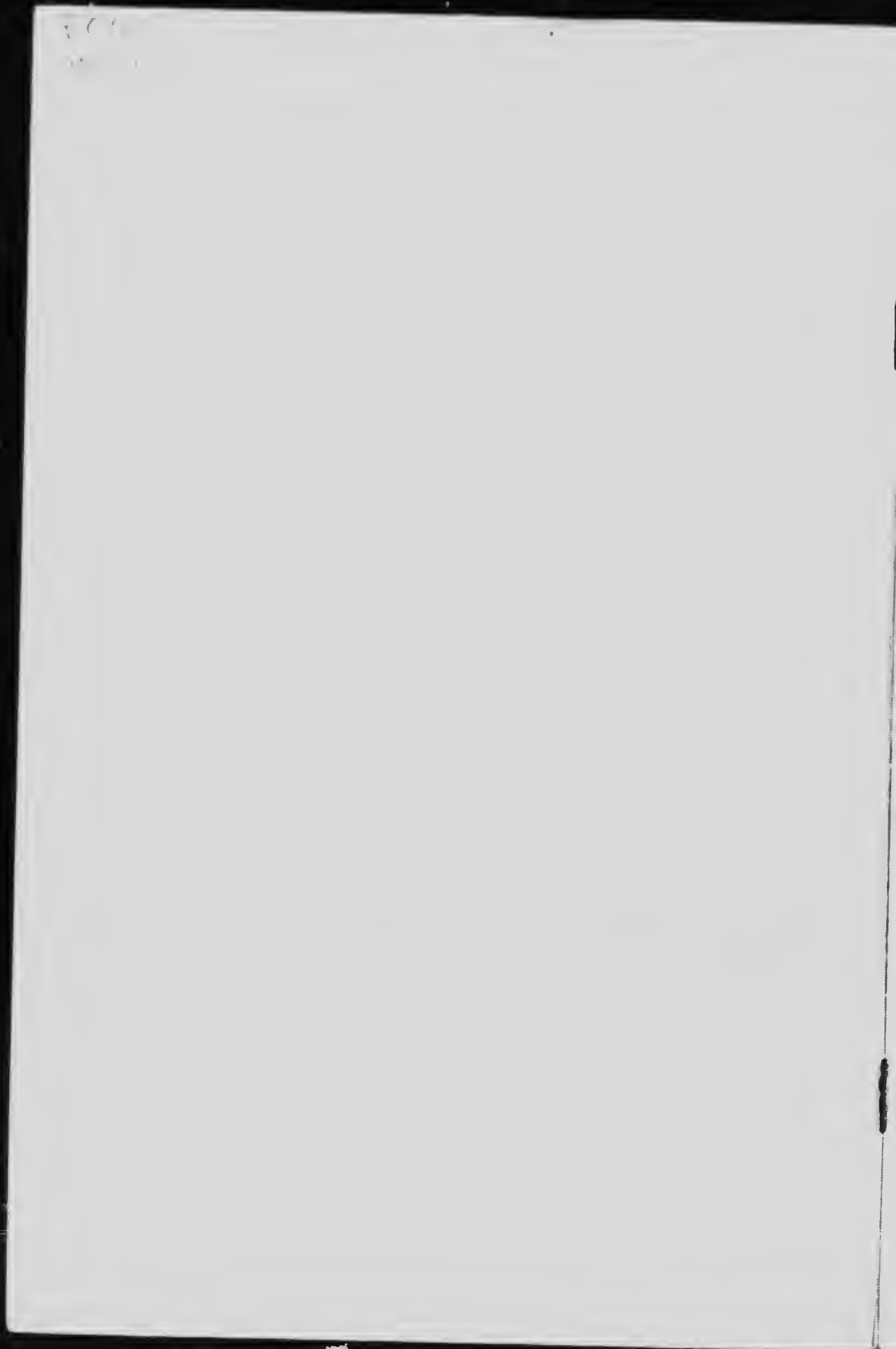
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BY B. E. WALKER, Esq.,

— TO —

THE CANADIAN CLUB, OTTAWA,

FEBRUARY 4TH, 1904.



ADDRESS

BY B. E. WALKER, ESQ.,

TO

THE CANADIAN CLUB, OTTAWA,

FEBRUARY 4TH, 1904.

In the last ten or fifteen years there has been a great growth in our confidence as to the solidarity of the scattered provinces and territories now comprised in Canada. We have at last come to believe that we are to be a nation. I am aware that there are those who will deny the propriety of using such a word to describe our political condition. But the Scotch are a nation, the Irish are a nation, and I shall speak of Canada as a nation. We are rapidly developing a great confidence in our future, and great confidence in the future of a young country is apt to take the form of boasting about it. We talk constantly about the size of Canada, its vast natural resources, its immense potency in producing natural wealth, and we take credit for all this just as if we Canadians had created Canada. Instead of this we should remember every day of our lives, with bowed heads, that Canada was made for us and for our heirs, and that we are merely stewards for posterity, answerable as we do well or ill by Canada. This confidence, however, as to what Canada will do *for us* is an agreeable change from the fears expressed by the doubting Thomases of the past, but it should always be accompanied by a grave and reverent sense of what we should do for Canada—a very different sort of problem from what Canada should do for us.

Before we approach in detail the duty of Canadians to Canada, let us set forth what will constitute success in the development of Canada; what will be a satisfactory fulfilment of our duty to Canada. An answer in a broad sense is not diffi-

cult. To produce that condition of national life which will support many, but not too many, millions in comfortable but not too affluent circumstances ; a civilization which gives as much liberty as is good for us ; a satisfactory division among the various classes of men and women of the labour to be performed and of the rewards to flow therefrom ; and a full recognition of the arts, and of learning in its highest forms and for its own sake.

Many other qualities may be added. I have purposely avoided reference to national morals and politics because in such a Utopia as I have sketched the moral conditions would certainly be satisfactory. We shall not arrive at such a Utopia, but surely it is something like what we should aim at, and "a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

Our honoured statistician, Mr. Johnson, tells us that Canada is about 3,500 miles in extent from east to west, and about 1,400 miles from north to south ; that its southern boundary of about 3,000 miles is about 1,400 miles of water and 1,600 miles of land ; and that its entire content is 3,750,000 square miles. He divides the southern part geographically into an eastern area of woodlands, a middle area of prairies, and a western area of mountains. The sea coast on the Atlantic, the Arctic, Hudson Bay, and the Pacific is greater than that of any other nation. Its inland lakes and rivers are the wonder of the world. Its forests, covering the whole of the Atlantic and Pacific areas, and stretching between these areas through the northern parts of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, and northward to the limit of vegetation, make a draft upon the imagination to which few of us can respond. I do not, however, intend to describe Canada. I only wish to startle your imagination as to what it means to be a Canadian, and to have come into possession of a life interest in such a domain.

All along our history there have been men who believed intensely in the future of the part of Canada which they called home, and some of them have dreamed of a larger Canada ; but few have dared to think of her as a nation destined some day to wield great influence as part of the governing power of the British Empire, or as an independent power, which latter God forbid. The love of Papineau and Lafontaine for Quebec ; of

William Lyon Mackenzie and Robert Baldwin for Upper Canada; of Joseph Howe for Nova Scotia, is enough, whether we regard as well or ill their struggles with the bureaucrats of Quebec, or with the family compacts of Upper Canada and Nova Scotia. The wider view of the Fathers of Confederation was, after all, made possible only by the struggles of these earlier heroes for representative government and home rule.

It would take too much time to trace the steps of our intensely interesting history from the first landings at Cape Breton, Sable Island, Annapolis, and in the St. Lawrence, through that romantic time of geographical discovery, missionary zeal, and fur-trading, ending not in the abandonment of what so often seemed a hopeless struggle, but in the turning over of the problem by the militant and religious enthusiasts of France to the domestic and colonizing Briton; to tell of the struggles for parliamentary government, and then for representative government; of the hopes and fears leading to the great plunge, confederation—that effort to link together provinces on both oceans, with hardly an interest in common and with gigantic natural obstacles between; of the building of our first great transcontinental railway and of our fears that it would not pay operating expenses; of our dreadful nights of despairing anxiety lest frost should prove that our prairies were practically worthless; of our mistaken feeling of dependence upon the United States as the only market for many of our products.

But when, since confederation, things were at their darkest, many of us repeated over and over again that old English proverb—"It's dogged as does it." We did not falter, and we talked as big as we knew how.

And when the railway began to pay dividends, and the farm boys who had left Ontario for Manitoba began to come back for a holiday every winter in their coon skins, when we began to see that the unfriendliness of the United States had been a blessing in disguise, then began to throb through the brain of one Canadian after another the conviction that as *one* nation, with possibilities beyond calculation, we had won.

Now that it can be done so readily, every Canadian should read the history of his country, both the period of romance

and that of political and industrial development. Without doing so he can never understand how precious is the trust which has come down to him. Let him also study the maps and survey reports, the blue-books—indeed anything that will cause him to understand Canada as a physical problem.

In discussing the possibilities of the development of Canada and our duty towards it, we must first consider it industrially, not only because that is the aspect which inevitably comes first, but because it is right that it should be so. Man's first right is to live. In the older world, society does not expect those members of the community who are literally seeking bread to be influenced by high considerations in their struggle for life, and we cannot remember too often that the men who settled this country and the men who are settling the western part of it now, came in almost every case seeking bread—bread for themselves and their children. Perhaps no one who has not seen a first effort in the bush where the settler is engaged in his furious onslaught on nature in order to clear the land wherefrom he expects to support his family, can fully understand why a young country in its early efforts at civilization is so intensely materialistic and so profligate in destroying natural resources merely for gain. We are old enough to have made excellent game laws, but none of us expect a settler who in Muskoka needs meat, or on a salmon river needs fish, to respect these laws. We must not fail to recognize that no destruction of what nature has provided is profligate if it is necessary to sustain life. But when men have attained comfort and go on destroying merely for gain what nature has provided, new considerations arise, and we have the right to ask whether such destruction is hurtful or not to the future of the nation; whether, indeed, we have the right to accumulate unnecessary wealth now by the destruction of what may be necessary for the mere bread of generations to come.

The natural resources to come under consideration may be roughly divided into three groups:—

1st.—Where we reap but do not sow, and, having once reaped, cannot replace. Our coal and other mines are examples.

2nd.—Where we reap as we sow. In older countries this would be true of wheat and other cereals. But in Canada this is not quite true even of wheat. From virgin soils we may reap

twenty-five or thirty bushels of wheat to the acre, which in a few years may fall on the same lands to fifteen or twenty bushels. Here to the extent of the surplus we have reaped without sowing.

3rd.—Where we may reap for a time without sowing, but only at the expense of posterity. Our forests and fisheries are examples.

In the treatment of our wheat fields in the North-West, our forests and fisheries everywhere, we are little better than barbarians, and I ask—How is enlightened sentiment as to our duty to be created? How can we make every Canadian understand that our precious position as the grower of the best wheat in North America can only be maintained by our putting back into the earth the constituents which have been used in growing our crops? How can we make every Canadian understand that, except where the land under the trees is worth more as a farm than as a forest, we should replace every full-grown tree we cut down by what will eventually produce another? And how can we make every Canadian sufficiently realize the enormous value we have in our fisheries to make him press for such an enlightened policy on the part of our government as will ensure these food supplies for ever? How, indeed, can we make him understand that if we take what it is possible and wise for us to replace and do not replace it, we are committing a crime against our own children?

We are doubtless destined to remain a democracy, and however little or much we may admire it, we may as well make up our minds to shape our future with reference to the fact that we shall continue to be governed by a democracy. One of the inherent defects of democracy seems to be that our rulers and our newspapers only represent the average of the intelligence and the morality of our people. In the service of the government and on the judicial bench men are needed with unusual ability and with unselfish devotion, and no services in society should so readily claim both qualities; but democracy will not pay for expert ability and does not expect unusual devotion to duty. We must, I fear, admit that we are rarely proud of our political conditions, of our civil service system, or of our press. We are only proud of the individuals in politics, civil service, or the

press, who are strong enough to rise above the level made by the average. But if present tendencies are not checked what must be the outcome? No sincere, sober, thoughtful citizen of the United States is really satisfied with what democracy has done for his country. Have we not, indeed, terrible evidence in the United States as to the lack of any peculiar virtue in democracy, *per se*, as a form of government? What, then, are we to do to avert the same result? Is it not clear that we must vigilantly guard against the inherent weakness of democracy by steadily lifting up the average of our own intelligence and morals? We must set before the young other ideals than gross materialism—mere money-making. We must save and increase such good qualities as tend to differentiate us from the United States. If we act as if the almighty dollar is the end, it will be the end, and this country will become a huge oligarchy dominated by selfish industrial interests, which will easily, by machine politics, register from time to time a vote supposed to express the wishes of the people, but really recording the determinations of the oligarchy. Whatever we may do we may be sure that in respect to virtue our government will fairly reflect the average virtue of the people.

When we turn to our newspapers we at once realize their tremendous influence. I have so many good friends among the newspaper men of Canada that I do not wish to be misunderstood, and I know that I am about to enter on dangerous ground. I suppose it is because of the violent manner in which politicians abuse each other in Parliament that newspapers abuse all politicians not of the party for which they stand, and misrepresent, more or less, all that these politicians say or do. The effect of this attempt to eliminate from an opponent all that is good, and to exaggerate all that is bad, is not so much to deceive the people as to leave them uncertain as to what to believe. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons for the cynicism regarding public and private virtue which is common to almost the entire press, and is much too frequently met with in our young people. And certainly this tendency to exaggerate all statements of fact must have a most unfortunate result on the veracity of people generally. How can the public as a whole have much regard for the truth when they realize that newspapers in making a case for their party do not hesitate

to colour the truth just as it suits their argument ? I wonder if I dare say anything about the personal and the social column ? I have not hesitated to do so elsewhere in the presence of reporters and they have applauded what I said. Indeed, they must have their own opinion of the class of people who use these columns in order to exploit themselves, the men politically and the women socially. Surely nothing could be more shocking, more horrid, than this vulgar desire for notoriety. But, unfortunately, all these objectionable features exist because the people who read the newspapers desire to find them there. My purpose to-day is not to blame the newspapers for giving the people what they want. It is to blame the people for not wanting better newspapers.

Nothing can, of course, be more important in the upbuilding of our intellectual and moral conditions than our educational system, but here, too, the inherent defects of democracy are most noticeable. That in a new country we should have badly-equipped and badly-paid teachers is perhaps inevitable, and time will surely cure these evils. As long as there is rapid development in new parts of Canada and continued expansion in many old parts, professional men of all kinds, and especially school teachers, will be demanded in too great numbers to make it possible to be very particular as to the qualifications of many of them. I do not, however, wish to discuss our educational system, but certain effects upon it of democracy. Unfortunately, in a democracy the idea of the average man seems to be to get as much as possible from the state without paying for it, and this is particularly noticeable in our educational system. As a natural result of this the politicians are willing to keep on enlarging the scope of national education, until it is hard to guess what our system will lead to. Doubtless, we shall eventually, at the expense of the state, examine the eyes and teeth of the children, and do many more things of a similar nature. One of the worst features, however, is the prevalent idea that the purpose of education is merely to fit the pupil to earn his living. I must not be understood as objecting to technical schools. Night schools of all kinds for those who cannot take a regular school course are to the last degree admirable, and technical schools as a superstructure to ordinary schools are much needed ; but I do

not believe in any system of education which does not make men think and which does not create a love of learning for its own sake. To spell, to write, to cipher, to think intelligently, to be able to hear evidence with an open mind, to speak and act like a gentleman—these are by far the most important elementary qualities in a system of education. Indeed, character and the power to think are the great end, and not the making of plumbers or of carpenters. We cannot make men fit to govern a nation, we cannot make patriotic thoughtful citizens, simply by technical education.

What I have said has been mainly suggestive. The theme is too great for a single address, and I have already spoken too long. I have asked many questions as to our future. Allow me to restate some of them.

We shall undoubtedly succeed industrially; but are we to be a cultured people? We are to be rich—are we to be wise?

Possibly in a generation or two, when the United States shall have reached her limit of productiveness of food for export, and we shall largely have taken her place, we shall be among the first in commerce. Shall we also be among the first in arts and letters? And unless we attain this distinction, shall we have succeeded as a nation?

Before the end of the present century we shall probably be one of the most powerful nations, or one of the most powerful parts of the British Empire. Shall we also be a just nation? Are we to develop so as to be what Great Britain alone now is—a nation that can be trusted to govern subject peoples justly?

We are to be a democracy; but will that be a guarantee of freedom or merely government by an oligarchy?

Perhaps much that I have said may cause you to imagine that I am by nature a pessimist. Far from it; indeed, regarding Canada there can be few who are greater optimists. But optimism must be ballasted with common sense. The wise optimist expects trouble, but looks upon all trouble as mere detail, and plans in advance to meet it. I am so proud of my country and so confident of my countrymen that I look for the best results; but my ideal of what we should eventually become is so high that all conditions which deter instead of aiding our progress are irritating.

We are just beginning to be on trial before the other nations of the world. Surely boastfulness is not the character to show them, but humbleness and earnestness. Still, we who have sprung from the best nations, with the highest ideals and noblest traditions, who live in a country that breeds hardy men—we who have held this great out-post for the British Empire—should not be satisfied with half-greatness, but should aim to be greatest among the great. And we cannot become a great nation without developing national character with decided moral greatness. We have not developed great moral qualities as yet, and there is enough wrong in our country already to make us anything but vain of our stewardship thus far.

We can never hope to achieve real national success unless we aspire beyond material interests to those higher elements of civilization which alone can make a nation great.

