

CANADA'S PLACE IN THE EMPIRE

(London Times, "Canada Number")

When their Majesties the King and Queen land in Canada, and receive the welcome that this enthusiastically loyal Dominion has been preparing for many months, they will be treading soil that has a crucial significance for the past, the present, and the future of the Empire. In Canada was first made manifest what we now recognize as the very essence of the imperial idea; and Canada in the political geography of the twentieth century seems destined to be the natural bridge between the Empire and those foreign countries which are its closest friends.

Just a century has passed since Lord Durham wrote his famous Report. By that historic document he persuaded Parliament to adopt the doctrine, which Chatham had conceived but had not been permitted to apply, that the proper mission of a nation at once free and imperial was to foster the growth of free institutions in the new countries won and inhabited by its far-ranging sons. Out of the Act of Union of 1840, which for the first time made the executive Government of Canada responsible to the elected Legislature, flows the whole current of widening liberty not only for the Dominion but for its younger sisters in the Empire, until the recognition of the adult nationhood of them all in the Statute of Westminster of 1931.

Blended Traditions

But if the vistas of imperial history converge upon the origins of Canadian liberty, so do the lines of contemporary politics converge upon the Canada of to-day. Great traditions of three peoples, on which the future of humanity seems now to depend, meet and blend in Canada as nowhere else. In institutions—freedom of thought and speech, self-government, and the Common Law—Canada lives upon an English inheritance, though much has been added from the rich experience of old France. In blood and language the descendants of the French pioneers who first opened up the country to European colonization preserve their identity and, as some think, may before long restore a French predominance in the Canadian population. Its interest and outlook, in the general trend of traffic and culture,

the King's subjects in Canada are Americans, proud indeed of their special allegiance and their distinguishing customs, but living the life and thinking many of the thoughts of their neighbours in the United States.

In the present generation the bonds between Canada and the three nations to which it is linked by history, by heredity, and by geography still hold fast.

Strong Links

The link of history with the British Empire will be visible for all to see when the King of Canada wears the Crown Imperial in his capital of Ottawa. The link of heredity with France has preserved the ancient faith, language, and way of living through nearly two centuries of political separation. The link of geography is typified by the thousands of miles of the undefended frontier, running from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which to Americans and Canadians is a thing too natural to be worthy of comment, but to the nations of envious Europe remains perpetually among the spiritual wonders of the world.

This drawing together of three contrasted elements is comparatively new. There have in the past been fierce disputes between English and French in Canada, reflecting the immemorial feud of the mother-countries in Europe, between the United States and Canada and consequently between the United States and the British Empire. In one form or another many of these ancient causes of controversy persist; but, as the articles in this Number show, they have without exception subsided from quarrels into differences of opinion among friends. The understanding has emerged that here in Canada, in spite of many superficial divergences, meet the thought and traditions of the three great communities that still remain pledged and consecrated to liberty in the face of a renegade world.

British Liberty

Nowhere in the Empire is the ideal of liberty more dearly treasured than in Canada, and perhaps nowhere in the world does its future seem so secure. The danger lies rather in the other direction. The development of the Canadian constitution has been unique in the modern history of the federal system for the extent to which provincial autonomy has thriven at the expense of central control. What are to be the next steps in progress is for Canadians to decide; but some of their best friends think that the realization of their true weight and dignity as a nation depends on two things: first, a closer knitting together of the political structure within the Dominion, and, secondly, the recognition that in the state of free association that Canada now occupies in the Empire, the adjective and the noun are equally important. It has been natural to think most of freedom while it was still imperfectly realized; now that it is complete and unchallengeable, Canadians will do well to remember how much they stand to gain by drawing on the general inheritance of the Commonwealth.

Grandsire Saw Micmac Wigwams On Market Square

Probably the most spectacular affair that ever took place on the Market Square (writes the late Mr. Benjamin Bremner in his "Memories of Long Ago") was during the visit in 1860 of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) the present Sovereign's grandfather, when the place was gaily decorated for the occasion, and a large number of Micmac Indians were allowed to pitch their wigwams about the square fronting the old Market House; and there they paraded their loyalty to the Crown before the Her Apparent.

Apropos of the royal visit are the following lines selected from an address in rhyme which was presented to the Prince by Mr. John Lepage and to be found in the second volume of "The Island Minstrel":

"Let acclamations loud and long
Ring o'er our hills and dales!
God save the Queen, our loyal
song,
And bless the Prince of Wales.
Where thousands press to see his
face,
The foremost place we claim,
This beautiful Isle, our dwelling
place,
Records his Grandsire's name.

Then let us our homage pay.
As rightfully we claim—
We hail the brightest star today
In Edward's arch of fame.

But still a finer cord we weave
To sound the praise we mean,
We love him for his Mother's
sake,
Because we love our Queen—
Our gracious Queen, may she receive
The best that Heaven bestows:
And long in health and splendor
live,
The envy of her foes!"

(From "Memories of Long Ago", by the late Mr. Benjamin Bremner)
I wonder how many of our people now living can remember what was known as The Old Barrack Square which contained houses in which were quartered a company of Her late Majesty's Troops in the middle fifties? In the centre between two rows of Officers' and Men's quarters was a large expanse of ground extending south from Sydney Street to the water front, and now covered by the City Hospital and Sacred Heart Home, and the south end of Rochford Street now running between these two institutions. Of course there was no street here then.

The main entrance to the barracks was facing about the lower or west end of the old Jail (or Pownall Square). On public holidays, especially the Queen's Birthday, now Empire Day, in the fifties and sixties, the Barrack Square was the scene of great glamour and military pomp. The old Volunteer Militia here held their annual parade with banners flying and bands playing.
The Imperial troops at this time

had been removed from the place. Visiting naval forces occasionally joined with our volunteers in manoeuvres and sham battles the summer time this was the regular place for drill until the parade shed was erected. In winter drill was carried on in the story of Pope's warehouse, Dr. Jenkins' office now stands.

Recollections Of The Old Barrack Square

Parade Days
On parade days in the old Market Square were to be seen arrayed all the glory and panoply of a few of the remaining officers of the Old Brigade of Charlottetown Militia which existed long before the establishment of the Volunteer Militia. They, of course, had an honorary place among the spectators, can recall but four of those venerated characters, viz: Major Davies, Captain Paul Mabey, Macgowan (for quite a time Clerk) and Richard Faught. My paternal grandfather was a captain in the old Charlottetown Militia, that was long before I was born. When a boy of about ten or twelve years it was a red-letter day in experience to be allowed Queen's Birthday to go to the Barrack square to witness the parade and firing of the big guns "The Port." And the "Band My! how they used to delight! There was Lobban's Band with Mr. Lobban leading with an instrument called a "Serpent," and looked like one, with its coils. Then came the newly-organized Galbraith's Band with its martial strains. I can remember the latter played, for the first time in the city, the newly-composed "Dixie Land," which quickly caught the ear of the public, and which is present is popular, also some songs written during the American Civil War.

First Scottish Gathering
I observe, in perusing the new volume of Lepage's poems that first Gathering of the Calabash Club took place on the old Barrack Square in the month of September 1863....

When a small boy I can remember witnessing a drill in Pope's Warehouse in the early part of the year 1860, when the men were addressed by Col. Stewart, Adjutant-General (who died in 1867). He informed them of the expected visit in coming August of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, (afterwards King Edward VII) and urged them to prepare, put their best foot forward, they would be called upon to see Queen Victoria's son from the Government House, the incident of which then was Lieutenant Governor Dundas.







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