

CANADA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

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NINE millions of Canadians in nine provinces, happy and prosperous, united in a broad Dominion which covers half a continent, now rejoicingly celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the union of 1867. At such a time, we who dwell by the shores of the Atlantic naturally enquire how it came about, and what part our own statesmen had in the constructive process by which the Union was effected. We shall find that it was a great and important part. For the union of 1867 united but three provinces, which were made four at the same time by dividing the then province of Canada in twain and giving the separated parts the new names of Ontario and Quebec. Two of the four provinces so united were Maritime. The real constructive work began there by the resolve of the three provinces by the sea to unite with one another. To that end their Governments had called a conference to meet in Charlottetown in September, 1864. Each provincial Government had appointed five delegates, fifteen in all. When they met together, as they did on a fine September morning, they were at one in their purpose to form a Maritime Union. They had, however, only begun to arrange the details of their plan when eight ministers of the Canadian Government arrived by steamer. These ministers asked to be admitted that they might present their views recommending the adoption of a larger scheme, by which the Maritime Provinces would be united with Canada. After hearing the plan and the forcible reasons for its adoption, the Maritime delegates agreed to it.

Thus it was that in the city of Charlottetown in 1864, in the grey stone building which houses the Government and Legislature of the province, occurred the great "meeting of minds" and the great decision that all the provinces of British North America should unite. And Charlottetown has not a little pride in the fact that there is the very cradle in which the infant Dominion was rocked.

Here may be set down the names of the fifteen Maritime delegates and the eight Canadian delegates who attended the Charlottetown Conference:

From Nova Scotia—Hon. Charles Tupper, W. A. Henry, Robert Dickey, Adams G. Archibald and Jonathan McCulley.

From New Brunswick—Hon. S. L. Tilley, Col. John Hamilton Gray, William H. Steeves, John M. Johnson and Edward B. Chandler.

From Prince Edward Island—Hon. John Hamilton Gray (there were two of this name in the conference), Edward Palmer, Andrew A. MacDonald, W. H. Pope and George Coles.

From Upper Canada—Hon. John A. Macdonald, George Brown, Alexander Campbell and William Macdougall.

From Lower Canada—Hon. George E. Cartier, Alexander T. Galt, Hector L. Langevin and Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

What were some of the principal reasons which induced the Maritime delegates to abandon their pre-conceived purpose and accept the larger plan? Foremost among these reasons was their loyal and patriotic allegiance to the British Crown, and that has always been a marked characteristic of these provinces by the sea. There have been rebellions elsewhere, but never within this region. And it was well known that the Imperial Government strongly desired the larger Union.

Another reason was found in the fact that Upper Canada and Lower Canada, which had been united as one province in the legislative union of 1840, had come to a deadlock so that their government could no longer be carried on. One administration after another had been formed only to be defeated within a few days or months. The Canadian border was threatened by armed bands of Fenians, then rampant in Ireland and the United States. Great Britain and the Republic beside us had come to the very brink of war over the Alabama claims and the Trent affair. World conditions demanded that British North America should be consolidated, organized, and prepared for defence.

Under these circumstances, the Charlottetown conference was adjourned to meet later in the same year in Quebec. Delegates from Newfoundland were brought into the adjourned conference. Four provinces were now to be included in the Maritime group, to be joined with Old Canada in a union that should extend from the head of the Great Lakes almost to the mid-Atlantic. But this was not yet to be. Later it was destined to a great extension westward.

We may now glance briefly at conditions that existed throughout Europe, the United States, and on the Canadian border in 1864. For the seventh decade of the nineteenth century, in which the Canadian Dominion was called into being, was fruitful of great events in Europe and America. Denmark despoiled of half of her territory, Austria deposed from the headship of Germany and Prussia promoted thereto, France overrun and conquered by

Germany, the Napoleonic dynasty ended at Sedan and a republic established on its ruins—such were some of the shocks that buffeted the nations of continental Europe. Within the same period, the whole of North America was also shaken by a series of political earthquakes, and its map, like that of Europe, was changed. Following the order of nature, these political throes began and were most violent in the southern latitudes of the continent. Maximilian of Austria, supported by Napoleon III and the arms of France, became for a brief space Emperor of Mexico, but later, betrayed by trusted friends, he was captured, courtmartialled and shot at Queretaro.

In the United States arose the most gigantic civil war recorded in history. For a time it seemed that the great republic must be rent in twain. Vast numbers of armed men struggled on scores of battlefields. The rivers ran with blood. Lincoln was martyred, but not until he had set his seal to the great emancipation edict which struck off for ever the manacles from millions of dusky hands. The purchase of Alaska from Russia followed, and the re-united republic became our northern, as it had before been our southern, neighbour,—“overshadowing us like a winter cloud from the north”, as Joseph Howe put it, in view of the fact that our powerful rival in North America had but recently disbanded some two millions of armed men.

A hundred years before, the whole of North and South America had been ruled from Europe. Now all that remained of European sovereignty, from Cape Horn to the Arctic Circle, was the British North American provinces. The great question, Shall we remain British? was in every thoughtful mind. It was felt that politics had become stern, almost tragic in the New World.

At the resumed conference in Quebec in 1864 the assembled delegates, after prolonged deliberation, formulated the famous “Quebec Scheme.” It contained the principal features that were later embodied in the British North America Act, 1867, but also contained—among other objectionable provisions—one which provided that the Senators should be selected from the Legislative Councils of the several provinces. This was loudly denounced by the anti-Confederates of the time as a bribe to induce the Legislative Councils to pass the union bill.

Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island declined to accept the terms offered them. In New Brunswick the Tilley Government, in view of the strong opposition that had developed, decided to submit the question to the electors, and did so at a general election in 1865. This resulted in the defeat of the union and of the Govern-

ment by an overwhelming majority; and as matters then stood, only Canada and Nova Scotia could then be united. While the legislature of the latter province seemed willing to adopt the scheme, a majority of the people were evidently hostile. Confederation was just then in an apparently hopeless plight, and it seemed that nothing could save it. An anti-Confederate Government under the leadership of Albert J. Smith (later he became Sir Albert) had been formed in New Brunswick, with Timothy Warren Anglin and other prominent colleagues. A British governor presided at Government House in Fredericton, and he was, of course, in favour of the Imperial policy of union. All our governors were then appointed from London.

Governor Gordon refused to accept the advice of his anti-Confederate ministers, and they indignantly resigned in protest. A new Government, or practically the former Government restored, assumed power, dissolved the legislature, and appealed to the electorate on the issue of the revised terms. The province now endorsed the Government by a large majority, reversing its vote of the year before, and saved the union. So it came about that delegates representing Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were sent to London and framed the British North America Act, 1867.

The Act took effect on July 1, 1867, and the first Dominion election followed in August of the same year. In the election Ontario and Quebec divided very much on their former political lines. Their people did not consider the question of union any longer debatable. They were nearly all in favour of it, and for very good reasons. It had broken the deadlock which had proved so formidable, rent asunder the galling bond that had held their two provinces bound together for a quarter of a century, and given full control of their provincial affairs to each of them. Ontario had gained her great prize of representation by population, and in the new central parliament would have 82 representatives instead of the 65 which she had when linked with Quebec.

In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the situation was very different. Howe had returned to political life, and had powerfully rallied the forces of opposition to the union Act upon which the people of the province had been given no previous opportunity to pronounce. With the opportunity now at hand, their decision was given with great emphasis. Howe and all the anti-union candidates with a single exception were triumphantly returned, and Hon. Dr. Tupper was the only unionist to survive the disaster. New Brunswick returned a majority for union, but also elected leading

spirits of the former anti-Confederate group, including the late Sir Albert Smith, Hon. T. W. Anglin and others.

The Liberal-Conservative Government at Ottawa was sustained in the election by a majority of 21 in a house of 181 members. Here again the Confederation battle was renewed early in the first session of the first parliament during the debate on the Address. In that debate, Howe, Tupper, Anglin and other Maritime members took a conspicuous part. Howe and his followers from Nova Scotia were bent on getting their own province out of the union, and there was great fear in the ministerial camp at the time that this movement might succeed. If it should succeed, the only Maritime province remaining united with Ontario and Quebec would be New Brunswick, and that province was considerably divided in sentiment on the question.

Suspense and trepidation continued down to the adjournment of parliament at Christmas to meet again in March. In the meantime Howe had gone to England to present the protest of Nova Scotia and its Legislature to the Imperial Government, and Dr. Tupper followed to oppose him. Before the session of parliament had resumed, it was known that Howe had failed in his mission. Later, after securing the better terms granted the province in 1869, and worn out in the arduous labours of successive campaigns, he entered the Government of Sir John Macdonald, of which at a later date Hon. Dr. Tupper, as he then was, also became a member. Thus the two great leaders from Nova Scotia, who had played so notable a part as political antagonists, sat together in the National Council.

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The Fathers of Confederation and their great opponents of those days have passed out of life's activities and laid down their heads in their last sleep. Another generation has arisen, and to-day—after an experience of sixty years, we are in a better position than they were to pronounce upon the merits of their constructive statesmanship. We may judge of their work by its fruits, calmly, free from the passion and fitful fever which agitated the minds of so many patriotic citizens in the Maritime Provinces sixty years ago.

Although for some years after the union was accomplished in 1867 we had reason, here in the East, to look upon it as an untoward event in our history, we hope that in the light of recent events a brighter day has dawned, and that all who live on Canadian soil between the two oceans may now fitly and joyfully join in the celebration of our National Jubilee. For evidence has accumulated

during the passing years that the union of 1867 was in its purpose and spirit of divine appointment. It seems to me now that had not the hand of Providence been behind and guiding the great Union Movement in the sixties of the last century, it could never have been accomplished,—so great were the obstacles and difficulties that were in the way.

It was indeed a great new departure, the beginning of a new era for British North America and for the British Empire, when the delegates from these then widely separated provinces agreed to set up a new Government in North America, uniting them in one Dominion under the Crown of Great Britain. There was a momentous historical significance in the fact that, ninety years after the Declaration of Independence across the border, the Governments and people of these provinces solemnly reaffirmed for themselves and for their children their determination to perpetuate on this continent the monarchic system of free government under the British Crown. Yet they introduced for the first time the federal idea into the British Empire. Before that, this scheme—a central Government and Parliament buttressed by local Governments and Legislatures—was unknown in any British country, and we think that in sixty years of operation it has proved to be well adapted to meet the needs and wishes of the Canadian people. We may now enquire, would that have been possible if the union compact of 1867 had not been brought into operation? We cannot think so.

What have been some of the other salient results of the union pact in British North America? In 1867 the four provinces of Upper Canada, Lower Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were united under this system. The Northwest then belonged to the Hudson Bay Company, and was peopled by a handful of white traders, several tribes of Indians, and millions of buffalo. On the Pacific coast, British Columbia had a white population of barely 10,000 souls. Only two of the united provinces had any railway connection with each other or with the United States. These were Ontario and Quebec, and the entire revenue of the Dominion in 1867-8 was only \$13,000,000.

Compare those conditions and figures with those of to-day. Canada has now a population of nine millions, the equal in energy, thrift, intelligence and morality of any like number of people anywhere on the globe. Would that have been possible had not the union compact of 1867 been put into successful operation? We cannot think so.

We may here also be reminded that in the year 1800, twenty-four years after the Declaration of Independence, the United States, without a mile of railway within their boundaries, had but a fraction more than five millions of people. In 1820, forty-four years after the famous Declaration, they were still without railways and, reckoning a million of slaves in the count, they had a total population barely equal to that of Canada to-day. Also we may take note of the fact that our nine millions were all born free and equal, which was not true across the border, and we have two and a half millions of people westward of the Great Lake, compared with the 10,000 who occupied that lone wilderness in 1867. Is there anyone who believes that this unexampled progress in the West and central provinces would have been realized had not the other provinces been united under one central government? We cannot think so.

Our great example has since been followed in all the larger British dependencies beyond the seas. Surely that counts for something to the credit of Canada. Ireland has been pacified after centuries of strife and bitterness, and is now prosperous and contented. Three great commonwealths under the Southern Cross, like their great leader and exemplar, under the North Star, have leaped forward in a new career of unexampled progress and prosperity. Would this have come about had not Canada led the way in the great Union Movement? We cannot think so.

Nor was this all. When the Great War shattered the Empires and toppled down the thrones of Europe, when Great Britain was engaged in a life-and-death struggle for her very existence and for the liberties of the world, there came to her aid half a million of Canada's best, bravest and strongest sons, and from Australia, New Zealand and South Africa almost an equal number, equally valorous and resourceful. Who is there who will venture to say that without this tide of living valour from overseas the war would have been won? And who believes to-day that these heroic and impetuous legions would thus have rushed over the thousand leagues of sea and land to the European battlefield had not each cluster of colonies been united under a central government loyal to the British Crown?

Thus important, vital and far-reaching in its influence and results at home and abroad was the great example set by Canada in 1867. To-day nine provinces extending from ocean to ocean are linked together by triple bands of steel, where sixty years ago, in half that vast area, no railway existed. Last year nearly 400 millions of bushels of wheat were grown in what was a barren

wilderness sixty years before. And within her broad borders, nine millions of Canadians dwell at peace in a land of liberty, celebrating the joyous Jubilee of their national birthday.

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It was a great parliament which assembled at Ottawa in 1867. At its beginning it represented four provinces extending from the Atlantic coast to the head of the Great Lakes. It had immediately made provision to build the Intercolonial Railway and thus supply these provinces with modern means of travel and transportation. Then the purchase of the Hudson Bay territories was made in 1869, and the boundary of the Dominion extended westward to the Rocky Mountains. In 1870 the new province of Manitoba was created, and in 1871 British Columbia was brought into the union. In 1873 Prince Edward Island had become the seventh province of the Dominion now extending from ocean to ocean.

Attending every session of the first parliament—and fifteen later sessions—I was an eager auditor and spectator of their sayings and doings, and wrote much concerning the actors in the drama that was being enacted on Parliament Hill. Well do I remember the coming in of the new men from the prairie and from beyond the mountains. Manitoba sent four members, and in the first federal election every seat was contested. Yet the voters were then so few and far between, that the four members elect had only polled 1,008 votes. British Columbia had six members, three of whom were returned by acclamation, and the three who went to the polls received only 342. Thus 1,350 votes elected to parliament ten members from beyond the lakes sixty years ago. It takes more votes to elect the sixty odd members for those regions now. And before the Intercolonial was well under way, the courageous men at the head of affairs at Ottawa had undertaken to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. Our southern neighbours had not ventured to do the like until they had half a million people on the far western coast. We had fewer than 10,000.

It is also worthy of note in passing that no succeeding parliament has contained so many men eminent in the public life of their several provinces as that which assembled at Ottawa with the first fall of snow in November, 1867. Each of the four provinces had sent a goodly quota of its ablest men. There were among them no fewer than twelve or thirteen provincial premiers or ex-premiers. A very much larger number had served, or were serving, in provincial cabinets. Be it observed also that most of these

men were either young or in the prime of vigorous manhood. A few only were comparatively advanced in years. Joseph Howe, "the old man eloquent", was 63, and his somewhat scanty locks were growing white. Sir Francis Hincks was 60, and his still abundant, bushy hair and beard were snowy. Sir George Cartier, although but 53, was also showing an appearance of age, his iron-grey hair being combed back from his lofty but somewhat receding forehead. Sir John Macdonald, the central figure among them all, was 52, but his curling locks were brown, and his every movement was marked by the alertness of youth. Tilley was 49; Dorion, 49; Dr. Tupper, as he was then called, was 46; McDougall, 45; Alexander Mackenzie 45;—"the granite-faced" leader of the Opposition. Mackenzie Bowell had numbered 44 years; Peter Mitchell 43; Thomas D'Arcy McGee, destined to death before the first session had ended, was 42; Hector L. Langevin, 41; David Mills 36; Edward Blake 34, and showing a ruddy face beneath his broad-rimmed slouch hat; Richard J. Cartwright 32, and always immaculately dressed. The venerable Senator Wark, who lived to see the first year of his second century, was then of the age of Joseph Howe.

No province in the Dominion has, in proportion to its population, produced more men eminent in the public life of our common country than Nova Scotia. It has given to Canada three of the ten individual prime ministers who have held that high position. These were Sir John Thompson, who was the fourth, Sir Charles Tupper, who came sixth, and Sir Robert Laird Borden who was the eighth in that distinguished order. Joseph Howe, after a long and notable career in Nova Scotia and in the government and parliament of Canada, became the fourth Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia and died in office. Hon. William S. Fielding became Finance Minister of Canada, and held that high position longer than any other man had occupied it. His retirement therefrom was caused by most regrettable illness. A. G. Jones, a very able public man who sat in the first parliament of Canada, was later the eighth Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia.

The list might be very greatly extended. It was not my privilege to know these men until I met them either en route to Ottawa or after they had taken their seats in parliament. But I came to know most of them very well later, and listened to their speeches with eager interest. And I may say of them collectively that men of gentler manners, fuller information of public affairs, or greater resources in debate I have never met.

Scores of others might be named, all of whom have passed from life's activities; known only to the present generation as old, grey-headed men, who when they sat in the first parliament were only in their thirties and forties. There were giants in those days, giants in their fullest vigour, many of them already famous and awaiting greater fame. A noble earl, when introducing the British North America Act in the House of Lords, had closed his speech with the words: "We are laying to-day the foundations of a great state which may one day overshadow even ourselves." The leading spirits of the first parliament were of the stamp which gave promise of that prediction's fulfilment. No one can deny that they possessed the grasp and the forecast of true statesmanship. And the gift of oratory was not wanting. Indeed, that was the golden age of Canadian oratory. On field nights hundreds of eager spectators, including myself, were privileged to listen to the picturesque and engaging eloquence of Howe, the tremendously energetic and forceful deliverances of Tupper, the melodious voice and classic periods of McGee, the stately diction of Blake, the music of the silver-tongued Huntingdon, the moving oratory of Hilyard Cameron, or the chaste and pleasing discourse of John H. Gray. These and many others in the first parliament were gifted with rare power to sway the feelings and the minds of men. These eloquent voices are now for ever silent.

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When the British North America Act went into force and the first federal Government was formed on 1st July, 1867, and later when on November 6 the elected representatives of the four provinces met in Ottawa, there was little more than what the great O'Connell called "a union upon parchment" existing between the larger provinces of Old Canada and the two smaller provinces on the Atlantic coast. But parliament proceeded to take steps to make the union a real one by providing for the construction of the Inter-colonial Railway. It took nine years to complete the connection, and in the meantime a change of Government had taken place at Ottawa.

Another feature of the first parliament, in which it differed from any that succeeded it, was that the two larger provinces had adopted the system of dual representation. From the beginning, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had declared against it. No member of their governments or legislatures was permitted to hold a seat in either the Senate or the Commons at Ottawa. Ontario and Quebec had other views. They not only permitted, but at

first rather encouraged their leading public men to sit in both the provincial legislatures and the federal parliament. John Sandfield Macdonald, the first premier of Ontario, sat in the House of Commons with all his government colleagues—John Carling, Stephen Richards, Matthew Crooks Cameron and Edmund Burke Wood. Premier Chauveau, of Quebec, was there in like fashion, supported right and left by the members of his cabinet, Ouimet, Dunkin, Beaubien, Archambault, Irvine and others. Mackenzie, Blake, and other members of the Ontario Opposition also held dual seats. During the sessions of parliament there were three Governments in Ottawa, representing in their administrative capacity three-fourths of the people of what then was Canada. And these three Governments were closely allied under the supreme leadership of that astute statesman, Sir John Macdonald. For three or four months of the year, Ontario and Quebec were ruled both in federal and in provincial affairs from Ottawa. With its members in close daily touch as well as in alliance politically, this combination seemed irresistible. It was a unique feature of the first parliament.

Another distinctive feature was the absence of cohesion among what constituted the Opposition when the first parliament met. Mr. Mackenzie, the leader of the Opposition, was an Ontario Liberal. Joseph Howe, the leader of the Nova Scotian contingent, and most, if not all, of his following were Liberals. But Liberalism meant something different in each of the provinces. The western Liberals could not, of course, accept Howe's programme of repeal, and he and his followers cared nothing for the issues which divided the Reformers of the west from the Liberal-Conservatives who were united under Sir John Macdonald. No Opposition in any Canadian parliament since that day has been so wanting in cohesion, or so hopelessly divided. The result proved that they could not assimilate. And yet in numbers this heterogeneous Opposition, made up of 36 from Ontario, 20 from Quebec, 18 from Nova Scotia, and 8 from New Brunswick—a total of 82—was quite a formidable body in a House of 181 members, leaving the Government at the outset with a certain majority of no more than 17. This was afterwards increased somewhat, but the majority was indeed small enough for a Government which had so formidable a task before it. That task was not only to prevent the threatened disruption, but to fuse together and consolidate the discordant elements and make of them one great Dominion, imbued with a national spirit.

Sixty years is not a long period in the life of a nation, but during that time it is safe to say that our excellent Constitution has been tried and not found wanting; a really surprising development of our natural resources over a vast area has been effected; agricultural, manufacturing and mining industries and trade have expanded to unexpected proportions. The acquired and potential wealth of Canada dwarfs that of 1867. A great state, which was but a vision sixty years ago, has emerged and grown in strong and fair proportions, and commands world-wide respect and admiration. The splendid fabric built on firm foundations, solidified and compacted by the lapse of years, is now a great state in being, and it faces the future freed from many of the dangers which threatened its endurance sixty years ago. For all of which, every patriotic Canadian has now abundant reason to rejoice and be thankful.

We can now realize that the Fathers "buidled better than they knew". For they were men of faith, the faith which moves mountains, and yet which, in the language of one of their number, "wrongs no one, burdens no one, menaces no one and dishonors no one." May this faith of every Canadian in Canada and of every province in its sister province continue and inspire us in the years to come! As between provinces, we know each other better than we did, and with this better knowledge has come increasing regard and respect. These should be nurtured. It is easy now to believe that in the coming forty years the material progress of Canada will be greater than it has been in the sixty years past. Then another generation, youthful and hopeful now, will have taken up the duties and responsibilities which we, their seniors, shall have laid down, and will be celebrating the Centennial of Canada's natal day. May that day be as bright and auspicious, and as vocal with acclamation and gratitude, as the Jubilee we celebrate this month.