

(April 22nd, 1912.)

Ontario.

By MR. E. F. B. JOHNSTON, K.C.*

AT a regular meeting of the Canadian Club held on the 22nd April, Mr. E. F. B. Johnston said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I feel comparatively safe when I find to the left of me the worthy President of this Club, and I feel still safer when I find on the other hand, one degree removed, the cautious and strong-minded Canadian citizen, Sir Mortimer Clark. I am quite sure that between these two gentlemen I shall not go very far astray in what I may say to you to-day.

It has given me a great deal of concern to know what to say to an intelligent audience like this, and properly so, because, I daresay the majority of you know Ontario and its history as well as I do and perhaps better. The subject is too large to deal with in the limited time at my disposal. I shall, therefore, content myself with dealing with the matter in as original a manner as I possibly can, not giving you a First of July oration, such as you hear all over this country from the town halls to the school houses, but pointing out some of the very significant factors from the standpoint of one who is not a historian, and, I am glad to say, not a politician. (Laughter.)

Now, Mr. President, what of the past? No historic or political record is due from me to you; but looking at Ontario as a distinct entity, part of the scheme of Confederation, what of the past? The history of Ontario is really the history of Canada. For the past two or three hundred years and up to the present time, Ontario has been foremost in the development of the resources of Canada. She has been always in the van in struggles for political liberty, for freedom and pure thought. Ontario has given to the world a system of education perhaps unequalled, certainly not excelled, in any other country on the face of the globe. In manufactures, she has gone the whole gamut, from the old wooden harrow to the complex steam engine, and now produces everything you can possibly think of or imagine. Not only so, but by her agricul-

*Mr. E. F. B. Johnston, K.C., required no introduction to the Canadian Club. A leader, if not the leader of the Ontario bar, he is also an earnest patron of the fine arts, and an assiduous collector of high class oil paintings and water colors.

tural industry and her inventions, she has arrived at perhaps the highest stage of present development. And Ontario, as I will perhaps show you, briefly of course, has, by the struggles of her sons in the past, given to this country and to the world a form of government which combines the best features of the highest type of monarchy with the best elements of republicanism. She has been pre-eminent in enterprise. I ask, therefore, to-day, what is the outstanding feature of Ontario not only in the past, but which I hope she will preserve in the future? I say, it is her intense vitality.

We must go back a little from the subject, because, if I began where I should like, it would be at the other end. Therefore, I must trouble you with one or two phases of the early history of Ontario. And if I can give rise to a new line of thought, it will be by enabling you to see commonplace things in an unusual way,—an interesting study for such institutions as the Canadian Club.

With reference to the early history of Ontario, perhaps the most interesting chapters we read of regarding any country in the world are those containing the story of this Province, and of the Dominion, for the story of Ontario is the story of the Dominion. It is a romance, the story of a dream and the result of the romance of dreamers. Four centuries ago, the vision of adventurous men was directed like that of a certain great ruler towards more worlds to conquer. Men were looking for a North-west passage. England had not given much encouragement. France was backward in giving aid. Italy to a large extent controlled the Oriental trade at that particular time. Spain had considerable commerce when Columbus set sail for the New World. Soon after him, John Cabot sailed from Bristol, later Jacques Cartier from St. Malo, and Champlain under the patronage of the Governor of Dieppe. These men all dreamt a dream, that if they would go west they would reach the shores of India and China. They thought there was an open passage; and when they sailed into the St. Lawrence they were confident that they had found it: hence we find the record in the name "Lachine"—the China. That dream possessed these men for years and years. It was the subject of a great deal of enterprise and adventure, to find a direct passage to the Orient. That dream came true! And so far as Canada is concerned, this was made possible through the efforts of one of the ablest sons of Ontario, Sir John A. Macdonald. Hong Kong and Liverpool have been linked together, and England has direct through connection with the Orient by the Canadian Pacific Railway, four hundred years after those visionaries dreamed their dream.

Another fact I state without comment. In those days, a small body of Jesuits came to this country, looking to a great domain, hoping to establish their Church and the dignitaries of the church in a new hemisphere. Through all sorts of trouble, and all kinds of privation, they saw a vision of a great Church and a great Order in this country. And their dream has come true.

But more than that, after all this had taken place, the English began to dream with regard to the Western country known as America. They saw the advantages of opening up trade and commerce with that country. The English dreamers looked to a period when the British flag would extend its sovereignty over the whole or the greater part of North America. They looked for greater power. Wolfe and Montcalm, representing two great nations, met on the Plains of Abraham, and the dreams of the English statesmen came true in 1760, and Great Britain obtained one-half of this continent as her own.

About that time certain factors were at work. The War of 1775 had a tremendous influence upon the destinies of the Province of Upper Canada, now Ontario. You may ask what it was. The War of 1775 gave birth to the United Empire Loyalists. They came with English thought, traditions and ideals; the men who settled here were loyal to the Crown of England, and they bound the colony to the Mother Land by greater ties than had ever bound it before. Their descendants to-day are loyal, and I have no doubt that the spirit that actuated them actuates the Canadian Clubs to-day, and also that vast Order of loyal women, The Daughters of the Empire, which is doing so much to strengthen the bonds of British unity. Their motives had the underlying element of imperialism. I don't mean for one moment the mere seekers after royal favor or after power,—what I mean by the word "imperialism" is the feeling of the memories and traditions of Great Britain that actuated in this country the man from behind the plough and the lad from behind the counter to risk his life for the flag. I say that same spirit has carried itself through the bulk of our population from the time of the Revolution of 1775 down to the present time.

Now in 1791 Upper Canada had 20,000 people, and Lower Canada 125,000; but it was even then that Upper Canada began to shape the destinies of this new country. The old government under the Constitutional Act was a very curious one. Seven members composed the Legislative Council, appointed by the Crown, and an Assembly of sixteen was elected by the people. Think of that: the government of this great

area was in the hands of about the same number of men as you send to the City Council of Toronto! No sooner had matters been placed upon what is called a constitutional basis than the fight for Responsible Government began,—in other words, it was determined that the government should be in the hands of the people and for the people, and not controlled by mere nominees of the Crown. Ontario was the aggressor in this movement; Upper Canada began at that time fighting for the people's rights. She fought that battle because of the conviction that the cause was just, and she has kept at it from that day to the present time.

Upper Canada therefore began to be a very important factor in the development of Canada. In 1792 John Graves Simcoe, the first Governor of Upper Canada, met with his Council at Niagara. Governor Simcoe was one of the first great dreamers of a great nation on this continent; and we do not know, and perhaps never will fully know, the debt this Province and the country owe to Governor Simcoe.

As I have said, Governor Simcoe was also a dreamer. What was his dream? To open up and develop this Province of Upper Canada by great national roads or highways. He started Dundas Street, Yonge Street, and the Governor's Road leading west towards Woodstock, and London, all these great national highways, or "good roads" as they would be called nowadays. That movement, started in 1792, has slept—not perhaps the sleep of the righteous, but certainly that of the sluggard, and it is only after a hundred years that Governor Simcoe's ideas are being taken up, and we find our Governments now directing themselves to the realizing of the great dream of that outstanding movement of a hundred years ago. Toronto was very small at that time: I suppose she could not muster then one-tenth of the number we see here in this room, even in self-defence; but there was a little tent in the little town of York, and on that tent flew the red flag of Great Britain, and in that tent was Governor Simcoe; and from that day forward this flag has been prominent, and it has been again proved true that trade and loyalty have ever followed that flag.

In the War of 1812, Upper Canada was the battle ground. I wish to point out the very significant fact, that in the War of 1812 the military and loyal spirit of Upper Canada was largely created. Our politicians on both sides of the House to-day, and the people throughout the country, are divided as to whether we should have a navy or a standing army or both, as a protection against the country to the south, which country I hope will always remain in the same peaceable relations with

us as it stands in to-day. (Applause.) We forget that a mere handful of men, with the same extent of borders, the Canadians of 1812, showed that they could and did defend their borders, while we are sitting and discussing the question academically. You remember how the United States charged that England had tempted the New England States to break their fidelity to the Union, and there were threats to annex Canada. I need not do more than mention Gen. Brock, the battle of Queenston Heights, the battle of Chippewa—in which twenty-five hundred were opposed by six hundred Canadians,—the battle of Stony Creek; I need only mention to you Laura Secord, the woman who, her husband lying wounded, found her way through the woods for twenty miles, taking the message her husband was unable to carry to Lieut. Fitzgibbons at Beaver Dam. The lesson I want to commend to your minds is,—that of such stuff are our Canadian women made. (Applause.) Then came the close of the war. Canada was victorious, but the lesson far beyond the mere physical or military victory, is that it made Canada become self-reliant. She became convinced that she could defend her own borders. And she has continued as a nation of self-reliant ideas, holding her head independently and boldly from a military and defensive standpoint, just as if she were free of obligations to England or to any other country.

Then we have the political struggle in Upper Canada, or what is now Ontario. To Upper Canada we must attribute the result of the struggle against the Family Compact, who were indulging in every kind of arrogance. But there were representative tribunes of the people who were fighting for the rights of the people, and their right to govern. The Union scheme was formulated in 1822. English was to be the only language, and the French language was to be dropped in Parliament in fifteen years. And let me say here—and I want to keep away entirely from the danger of this question—no man can possibly overestimate the importance of the English language as the language of communication, and let me tell you this, that in the country or countries where you find the English language used, you will find it followed up by the introduction of English thought, English ideas, English dress, and English customs, with the well-known Englishman's ideas of liberty. (Applause.) You go to a place like Holland, where they teach English in many schools for one hour per week,—why? because they feel that in order to take their stand in the world they must be Anglo-Saxons in language at least, in order to carry on their business and trade. We have worthy citizens in Canada,—I don't care whether they are Germans,

Russians or of other nationalities, men who are fine settlers, and likely to make their way in the world, but they lack the traditions of the Empire. What is it to the Pole, or the Hungarian, or the Russian, what Trafalgar or Waterloo means to the Briton? What interest has the foreigner in those who were the great warlike spirits in the history of our Motherland? The conquests are to him only dry historic facts, that do not carry to his mind any of the spirit or traditions which they do to the descendants of the English people. Therefore we cannot overestimate the importance of the English element, and the Anglo-Saxon tongue,—with of course a little Scotch and Irish thrown in—(Laughter)—in a country such as this.

We had the Family Compact to deal with. Robert Gourley came here about 1817. He sent out questions to the various municipalities as to the cause of their troubles and the remedies they would suggest. He called meetings, and for the first time perhaps in the history of the evolution of civilization, conventions or meetings to discuss public matters were made illegal by the law of this country. He was driven out of Canada charged with sedition. We look back to him as one of the pioneers in our struggles for liberty. Men like Bishop Strachan and John Beverley Robinson, prominent and well-known, were unfortunately against the popular side, conscientiously no doubt, but supporting the cause of tyranny and a wrong principle of Government. Gourley dreamt of a free and enlightened people with responsible Government, and Time has justified his vision.

Then there was William Lyon Mackenzie, of whom personally I am not going to say one word, one way or the other; but let us remember that his rebellion was not against the Crown, but against the mal-administration of political affairs in this country. It is needless for me to go over his record, because however we may differ as to the methods he adopted, men of his energy and type led directly to the Responsible Government which we enjoy to-day. It is rather a sad spectacle, and one which we would wish to forget, that muster of a thousand untrained, undisciplined men on Yonge Street, armed more for the harvest than for battle, with their scythes and pitchforks, but routed almost at a moment's notice, and the cause they worked for apparently lost forever. But they were willing to risk their lives for a sentiment, for the principle of Responsible Government: and the result, as you know, was that their object was accomplished eventually by peaceful means instead of through the medium of force. Strange that those who struggled most against the rights of the people

wrought out the salvation of the cause by reason of their own actions and tyrannical conduct. The champions of the people suffered as rebels, but by their actions they gained freedom and relief against an oligarchy, and their struggle resulted in the final triumph of the people. It is strange too that the Family Compact was composed of men who were loyal to British institutions, yet fought against the people's rights and self-government. They began in the cause of freedom. They became tyrannical. Finally they were the direct cause of their own political destruction.

Then I come to another dream. Perhaps one of the most remarkable conditions in the history of the Province existed when the question of the government of the two Provinces was being discussed. There appeared upon the scene a man known to history as a great statesman, Lord Durham. Away back in 1838, when this was a sparsely settled Province, and Upper Canada had not its proper share in the government, he prepared a report in which he dreamt of the most wonderful things. He begins by advising a Legislative Union, and says that the Executive should be responsible to the House of Assembly, as it is at present; and that there should be municipal institutions having control over their own local affairs; and he advises an Intercolonial Railway for the binding together of the Provinces, in fact as well as in name. He was a dreamer in 1838. Well, that dream was partly realized in the new constitution given in 1840 by the Act of Union, by which there was a Council of twenty appointed by the Crown, with an Assembly of eighty-four members, and municipal control was established in the municipalities over their own local affairs. And the next National step, the great Act of Confederation, was the full realization of that dream, which in accord with the Report of Lord Durham in 1838, but preceding it by twenty years, Chief Justice Sewell in 1816 had advocated. His remedy was the government and management of the colonies of England through a similar plan of union. This is what led up to the consideration of the scheme vitalized by the Confederation Act. It is well known to all of you that the discussion and public feeling began over the disparity of representation of the two Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Upper Canada in 1855 had 250,000 more people than Lower Canada, and there was consequently an unfair representation, because the Assembly contained eighty-four members equally divided between the two Provinces. There was a great battle fought, within the memory of some of us, and the result was the great Federal Union of 1867, dealing largely with the question of the right to manage our local affairs—with the rights of

the representatives of the people of each Province to determine what was in the interest of the Provinces and with the right to a system or representation based on population. Another great object was that of binding together the Provinces into one united, harmonious whole. This was the realization of the dream of that old dreamer, Chief Justice Sewell, years before. What part did Ontario take in this great movement? From 1867 to the present time, Ontario has been the aggressor, the fighting power, the one element that has struggled more than any other Province for the realization of fuller Provincial rights under the Confederation Act. And for thirty years Sir Oliver Mowat fought the battle largely single-handed. In all the Provincial struggles and in all the victories you will find seventy-five per cent. due to the energy, the forethought and the far-seeing qualities of the small man who controlled the destinies of Ontario for so many years in Queen's Park, Toronto.

Now, gentlemen, what of the present? At the present moment Ontario is prospering and progressing a great deal faster than we think she is. Our eyes are blinded somewhat by the glamor of the great Northwest. When Canada is spoken of, we think of the millions of acres awaiting settlement, of the tremendous flood of immigration, of the great wheat crop, and the productive richness of the Western Provinces. We forget Ontario. From statistics which I happened to look at the other day, relating to 1910, the total market-value of the wheat crop of the Northwest was something like \$110,000,000; and we forget the fact that for that year, in the crop of hay alone, Ontario's marketable production was \$55,000,000! Surely we do not need to look to the West to see the prosperity and progress of this country with such a showing as that!

Then we have railways making Canada the seventh in the world as to mileage, and in Ontario, perhaps the largest mileage per capita of any country in the world. Ontario is a country of power—I don't mean the power of the great, or the power of money, but the power that moves the world, the power of science, of manufacture, of production, the great electric power schemes which we have, and the great electric-producing power capacity, which Ontario, perhaps beyond any other country, has within her own borders. And we are changing the character of this power, so that one has but to look, and he will see that all this tremendous force is something entirely different to what it was ten or twelve years ago. It behooves us to see what we are going to do with our contracts and franchises based upon electric energy. A few years ago,

power had to be carried along the lines of railway, and a steam engine had to be moved from one farmer's place to another to do his threshing. Now, power is no longer a fixed article, but a commodity than can be transmitted and dealt with as something separate and detached. And the time is not far distant when the farmer will order one, two or three horse-power delivered to him just the same as we order our milk, eggs, or groceries and have them delivered at our homes. That may be a dream, but things are tending that way. Power has become, instead of a fixed principle, a merchantable commodity, the same as wheat or anything else. And we have to watch so as not to tie Ontario up for the future by any franchises or arrangements which may become absolutely obsolete or productive of great mischief to our country in ten or fifteen years hereafter.

In manufacturing and commercial activity, Ontario is at the front. I need not say we have within a stone's throw of this place two of the highest commercial buildings within the British Empire, and we have in this city perhaps the second largest manufacturing establishment within the whole scope of British domains. You have at the present time the development of new areas of pulpwood, and minerals. You are supplying the world's markets. And in addition to that, you are devoting your time and money on a vast scale to the development of the educational facilities of the country, and, I am glad to say, of the higher life of the people.

This is your present. What of the future? We have discovered a clay belt, which is said to be tremendously productive. You will find that Toronto and Montreal will have to look to their laurels, because there may be a second Toronto north of the Height of Land, and this within a comparatively short period, if we are informed correctly as to the capabilities of our northland territory. Is that dream too rosy to indulge in? I think not. We may fairly look forward to such development and change of character and such a growth of industries, as would have seemed absolutely chimerical half a century ago.

We are in the midst of great undertakings. We are enlarging our canals and extending our railway systems. But we are using up our capital instead of living on the interest. We are taking the national resources of our Province, and living on them extravagantly and luxuriously, not investigating which of them might be conserved in some way, or protected, so that when the lean years come and our natural resources are all gone, we may have something left to fall back on in the rainy days. Another thing,—we have not thought much (ex-

cept in an isolated sort of way now and then) about what my friend to my left, Mr. C. C. James, the late Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Ontario, has called to our attention,—we have not thought out the best crop for particular soils whereby the maximum production at the minimum cost and minimum degree of exhaustion of soil can be obtained. A few years ago people would have laughed at you if you had suggested the production of tobacco in Ontario; now tons of it are grown in Essex and adjoining districts. So in small fruits—except around Grimsby and perhaps at Burlington, it was thought these could not be grown; to-day the whole lake shore is devoted to them, some places being far better than those I referred to, and yet generally unsuitable for wheat and similar products. You get the largest amount of result from the smallest amount of investment by having products and soil in harmony. And then you begin to realize that the great natural wealth and resources of production within this Province can be vastly developed, and made infinitely more fruitful.

What of the future? What of the future in regard to our own lives and the life of the nation? Shall we be content to rest as we are; to hear occasionally talks of graft, and of improper conduct, and of dishonest lives? Or shall we look forward to accomplishing a higher life for individuals as well as for the nation? These are matters for the future. I think I have the right to say, we can make this Province the veritable home of content, we can make her the haven of peace, and by our efforts and by looking towards the higher ideals, we can make her the sanctuary of the righteous both in word and in deed.

Now, gentlemen, I have taken up your time quite long enough. I have gone very briefly through some of the salient points of Ontario's history. A few words in conclusion: I thank you for the very kind attention you have given to what I have said as the result of my thoughts upon the Province of Ontario, the subject chosen for me. We have a justifiable pride in our Province. From what I have said, no member of our community could fail to feel a certain pride and a certain outstanding admiration present to his mind in looking back over the records of Ontario and contemplating her present and future conditions. She is above all other Provinces the keystone of that great arch of Confederation, which rests one arm in the fogs of the Atlantic, and the other upon the shores of the blue Pacific. We have faith in her integrity as a Province: we have unbounded confidence in her future. And in these things you agree with me, I know.

I, too, dream!—not of annexation (Applause), not of independence (Hear, hear)—but of a Greater Britain, encircling the globe with her fleets of commerce. And I see Ontario in future years taking a leading part in the councils of the world. I can see her the home of peace, progress and plenty. And it is no stretch of imagination for us to say, as we look down the avenue of Time, we can see the great fabric of Imperial Federation, with our own Province always in the forefront of all that makes for national greatness, and all that tends towards the higher and cleaner life of a great country. You and I can help in making this dream come true! (Applause.)
