

(February 19th, 1912.)

Manitoba and its Relation to Confederation.

BY MR. J. A. M. AIKINS, M.P.*

AT a regular luncheon of the Canadian Club held on Feb. 19th, 1912, Mr. Aikins, said:

Mr. President and members of the Canadian Club,—I wish to thank you, sir, for your kindly words of introduction. It was well for you that the members have had a comparatively simple fare up to the present as there is a long bill before them. The president, gentlemen, in requesting me to speak, gave this as a subject—"The Inception of the Province of Manitoba, references to its discovery, settlement, and early history; growth and conditions prior to Confederation, the main reasons for and against Confederation, the results which have followed, and the part the Province now plays in Confederation, finishing up with a short recital of Manitoba's natural advantages, resources and possibilities." (Laughter.) We have, as you see, numerous courses, and if I delay on any course I ask you, Mr. President, to ring the bell and change courses.

Manitoba and the West were discovered and developed from the same causes which have led to the discovery and development of other countries—the desire and instinct to live—not merely say bare existence. People want to live comfortable, happy and prosperous lives, hence the disposition for inquiry, for adventure and acquisitiveness—to use the phrase of Sir Daniel Wilson, "hence accordingly." Henry Hudson in 1610, desiring to discover the Northwest passage to the rich eastern countries, sailed into Hudson's Bay. His discovery was the hour of his misfortune. His soldiers mutinied and placed him and six faithful sailors adrift in an open boat, on the bay where he found his grave beneath the waters. His fame is forever written on that bay which is known by his name. I trust that the name by which in its early days it was christened will not degenerate into Hudson Bay but will always remain as Hudson's to suggest the name of its great discoverer.

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But the news of his discovery became soon known in England. One of the returned mutineers taking care to shield himself, told the story there. Next year a vessel was sent out to search for the lost navigator, but failed to find him. They investigated the bay further, and for three hundred years people have sailed over it. It became important. Mr. President and gentlemen, it is to become of further and greater importance in the development and future history of the West of Canada.

Radisson and his brother-in-law, De Groselliers, were also influenced by the same spirit of enterprise and adventure. At their home in Three Rivers they saw a great quantity of furs coming from the West and their cupidity was aroused. So in 1659 they started out to discover the rich places whence came the furs, and if possible get some for themselves. Those who live in the East to-day are similarly attracted by western products, but they employ more polite methods in securing them. I shall not delay by telling you of their adventures, their narrow escapes from the Indians, their successes and their failures. In the year 1661 they went as far as the Lake of the Woods. They returned to their own country laden with furs and fame. Radisson then applied to the Governor of Quebec for a license to trade in the West. That Governor must have been an ancient politician. He said, "I will give you that license provided you share with me one-half of the profits." Radisson declined to do so and started out with Groselliers. They went as far as the Western Prairies and returning in the following year found Hudson's Bay from the land side. They came back from that trip with \$250,000 worth of furs of which the Governor promptly confiscated 90 per cent.

That confiscation led to a great historical event. That one action alienated Radisson and De Groselliers. Radisson went to France and was refused redress. He returned, and in Boston he and De Groselliers met Sir George Cartwright. He induced them to accompany him to England, and there introduced them to Prince Rupert, an adventurous spirit like themselves, who secured Royal favour, and thus was formed in 1670 the greatest monopoly the country ever had, "The company of gentlemen merchants, adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay." Shortly after Radisson and De Groselliers and others of the company set out and sailing into Hudson's Bay established Port Nelson. Those two had differences with the Governors of the company, and turning again to the French established Fort Bourbon further up the river. They then went inland and discovered the water route to the bay along the Red River, across Lake Winnipeg and then up

the Nelson River to its mouth. That became the trade route from England and the East to the centre of Canada. Sometimes when articles were wanted in the West from the East of Canada they were shipped from Montreal to England, then to Hudson's Bay and by the river route into Fort Garry.

Is it any wonder that the people of the West are not pleased when they hear the people of Ontario asking that Port Nelson and the Nelson River should be part of the Province of Ontario? We are quite willing to share with you our port on Hudson's Bay to the same extent that you share with us the western ports which properly belong to us—at Fort William and Port Arthur (laughter).

I cannot delay you with the story of Pierre Lemoine Sieur d'Iberville, sometimes called the first great Canadian. Suffice it to say that he advanced upon Fort Nelson in 1694 and took it for the French. It was recaptured by the English fleet in the following year. It went into the possession of France again in the great battle on Hudson's Bay in 1697 when Lemoine swept the English fleet therefrom. While he was celebrating the victory the French and English Commissioners were seated around a table making the treaty of Ryswick by which the French gave a large part of the territory to the English. Sixteen years later, by the treaty of Utrecht the whole of Hudson's Bay was relinquished to Great Britain, and with it the Nelson River and the whole of the great basin which it drains, including Manitoba, Saskatchewan and nearly all of Alberta.

I will not delay you with the story of that other great explorer La Verandraye. Suffice to say that in 1731 while sitting in his lonely cabin at Nipegon he dreamed of the West and of discovering it more fully. He went westward as far as the Lake of the Woods and there established Fort St. Charles, where the following year his son and a company of twenty voyageurs were murdered by the Indians. Only last year their graves were discovered. La Verandraye pressed on to Lake Winnipeg where he established a fort, thence to the mouth of the Assiniboine River where at its junction with the Red River he built a fort which he called Fort Rouge. And there the name remains to-day as part of Winnipeg. The site is now occupied by the railway and bridge of the Canadian Northern Railway. La Verandraye advanced a little further to what is now known as Portage la Prairie and established Fort de la Reine. His fur trade prospered.

Then happened the great event of 1759. Wolfe, one of the early heroes of this country whose monument ought to be erected not only in Canada but in England, captured Quebec.

As he sailed up the river in the dead of night he repeated, it is said, those words of Gray:—

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

For him it was the grave, but for England glory. British Canada became a possibility—now a Dominion which we hope will one day be the centre of the Empire and a leading nation of the world.

I shall not take time to tell you of the Northwest Company. The French fur trade declined when Quebec fell, but a number of thrifty Scots of Montreal—who had an acquisitive disposition—(a not unusual trait for them, and I suppose there are some Scotch men here, yet I make no apology) took advantage of the opportunity, formed the Northwest Company and went into opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company. The employees were mostly French-Canadians. These hardy adventurers and those of the latter company chose their wives from among the Indian women, and thus arose a race possessed of savage instincts from their mothers and some of the intelligence and perseverance of their fathers. If there is anything that ought to convince Canadians to be careful of the population coming to this country it is the story of the half-breeds and metis. They were those who in 1816 caused the uprising which led to the battle of Seven Oaks in which Governor Semple and twenty of his men were slain and Fort Douglas was razed to the ground. Those were they who caused the Red River rebellion in 1869 and 1870, and the Northwest uprising in 1885. We should be careful to whom we give possession of this country, for they will be in our democracy governors of our country.

Just a word about Lord Selkirk, a strong and enterprising man of philanthropic inclinations. He saw the crofters of the north of Scotland driven from their homes, he saw also poverty in the north of Ireland. He conceived the idea of forming a settlement of some of these in Prince Edward Island, and did so in 1803. A few years later, in 1809, he settled some in Upper Canada, and in 1811 he started one hundred men for the fertile plains of the West. There were difficulties, but he overcame them. He was opposed by the Hudson's Bay Company which had control of the west and wished to keep it as a fur preserve. Lord Selkirk to overcome this purchased a controlling share in the Hudson's Bay Company. As a result he bought from the company 116,000

square miles of land, which included the whole Province of Manitoba, part of Saskatchewan and some of the United States which we failed to keep—(laughter). The first band of Lord Selkirk's settlers arrived at Port Nelson in the fall of 1811. They spent the winter there, and the following year began the long trip to the Red River. In the beautiful month of August these first farmers climbed its banks and planted there the standard of Great Britain. There was constructed by the Hudson's Bay company Fort Douglas (where now in Winnipeg the C. P. Railway station stands) to protect the first settlers upon the prairie. They brought with them English institutions and possessed the land forever for the British Empire. The Hon. Mr. Howe said in respect of Nova Scotia, and so we may say in respect of Manitoba:

“Hail to the day when the Britons brought over,
And planted their flag with the sea-foam still wet,
Above and around it their spirits do hover,
Rejoicing to mark how we honour it yet.

“Beneath it, the emblems they cherished are waving,
The rose of old England the roadside perfumes,
The thistle and shamrock the north winds are braving,
The hawthorne in beauty everywhere blooms.”

In 1820 Earl Selkirk died and the Northwest Company passed into the control of the Hudson's Bay Company. Some time later the settlers became dissatisfied with their autocratic government and demanded some voice in making the laws for the settlement. The council of Assiniboia was established and continued to legislate for Prince Rupert's land until the formation of the Province of Manitoba.

In 1864 overtures were made by Canada to buy out the land from the Hudson's Bay Company. It was not the big Canada of to-day, but the same aggressive spirit that moves Canadians to-day was the spirit of that little Confederation. Owing to the probability of Confederation then dawning upon the political horizon the Canadian Ministers deemed it advisable to postpone action. In 1866 while Canadians and those beside the sea were considering Confederation, an Anglo-American syndicate was formed to buy out the Hudson's Bay Company's land with the object of settling them on American lines and by American methods. The Imperial Government did not approve the scheme, and it was consequently dropped. In 1867 the British North America Act was passed. That Act, which forms the constitution of the Dominion of Canada, provided that: “It shall be lawful for the Queen, by and with the advice

of Her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, on addresses from the Houses of Parliament of Canada, to admit Rupert's Land and the Northwest Territory, or either of them, into the Union on such terms and conditions in each case as are in the addresses expressed, and as the Queen thinks proper to approve, subject to the provisions of this Act."

The Government of Canada then purchased the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company in their lands for £300,000 and reserved to the company one-twentieth of all lands surveyed in the territory for future settlement and certain trading posts. Sir George Cartier said in moving the second reading of the act "The name of the new province will be Manitoba, a very euphonious word, meaning 'The God that speaks.' Well, let Canada's latest addition always speak to the inhabitants of the Northwest the language of reason, truth and justice." We Manitobans think we have complied with that. Manitoba has blazed the way for the other Prairie provinces in good self-government, in religious and educational institutions, and placed before the incoming people of the west true ideas of British Nationalism. We are greatly indebted to the Province of Ontario for many of these things. We cannot forget the fact that for 34 years Manitoba's Attorney-Generals, whose duty it was to direct the legislation of the Province, were Ontario barristers. For 24 years the Premiers of our Province have been Ontario born. He who is now occupying that position, is the son of U. E. Loyalist parents and was born in Prince Edward county. I would not like to say how long I wish him to remain there, some might wish otherwise—(laughter). Our judges and the members of the Manitoba bar in its earlier history belonged to the Ontario bar. They established our jurisprudence. The churches of the East sent missionaries and money to establish the moral strength of our young Province. Teachers from Ontario laid the foundation of the educational system of Manitoba. Some people in Ontario object to so many teachers going to the West. You should be thankful for the opportunity that is given you to send out well trained teachers, good, loyal, Canadians, to train the children of the thousands that are now coming in and place before them ideals of the true Canadian nationality. Indeed, in short, Manitoba is a duplicate of Ontario. In Parliament recently we heard about jointed or matched lumber for building, the two edges planed so that they fit close one into the other. Ontario and Manitoba in the building of our country are matched and jointed on the sides which meet, and well it has been. They have held against all the strain and stress which have been put upon them. I have no doubt that the good

sense and kindly spirit of our people will see to it that no greater strain will be put upon that joining. We desire to be always united.

Gentlemen, it is true there has been some little strain. By an act in 1881 the boundaries of Manitoba were extended. The extension on the east was to meet the western boundary of Ontario. A dispute arose concerning that western boundary. A case was submitted to the Privy Council. The legal representatives of Ontario, Manitoba and the Dominion, consented that not only should the western boundary be decided but that the boundary to the north of Ontario and to the south of Manitoba should also be determined. The decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council fixed the northern boundary of Ontario as being the southern boundary of Manitoba as far east as the line of longitude drawn due north from the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, that is, the line of longitude which runs, perhaps, fifty miles west of Fort William. That line of longitude was declared to be the eastern boundary of Manitoba. In 1889 Ontario with the wisdom of the wise had its northern boundary fixed by an Imperial Act. Manitoba hesitated, but in the act fixing the Ontario boundary the recital declared that the boundary between Manitoba and Ontario was the boundary so fixed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which boundary extended as far east as the line of longitude to which I have referred. Is it any wonder to you that the people of the West feel a little restless when Ontario claims that very same territory which the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided was part of the Province of Manitoba. I am not so sure that the present Government may not give you some of that very territory. We will find that out later. I am not entirely in the confidence of the Government, consequently I am not prepared to say what they will do. Assuming that the Government will accept the boundaries fixed by the late administration, running from the northeasterly point of Manitoba to some point west of James' Bay, Manitoba will have a territory of 250,000 square miles. The area of the Province at present is 73,732 square miles. Ontario, which is submissively modest (laughter), will have 400,000 square miles. This added territory does not contain any famed forests, or any great fertile area. It may have minerals, and perhaps water powers of considerable value. But I hope that, whatever that territory will be, Manitoba will have both Fort Churchill and Port Nelson. We have no objection to giving you access to those ports any time Ontario wishes to get it.

It is impossible to give the products of rural Manitoba for the last year. For the year 1911 with not more than 60 per cent. of their agricultural products actually disposed of, over \$100,000,000 was put in circulation from the farms of the three Prairie Provinces alone. As you know, the leading cities of Manitoba are Winnipeg and Brandon. Winnipeg has a population of at least 140,000 and 264 factories. Brandon, the second city, has a population of 14,000, some industries, and is the centre of a great agricultural district. Its exhibition, as a purely agricultural exhibition, is, with the exception of the Toronto fair, the finest in Canada. Next year we will have a Dominion fair, and I am instructed to invite you all to visit the great West and see what Brandon is. The old order of things is changing and giving place to the new. The beaver has gone, but if you believe in transmigration his spirit of industry and perseverance lives in the people of the West. We no longer see the old hand stones whereby the settlers ground their wheat into flour. The modern mill with specialized machinery is in their stead and turns out thousands of barrels of flour per day. No longer the prairie grasses attract the buffalo. The buffalo have disappeared and the domestic kine grazes in their place, and golden grain sways in the wind. Instead of the Indian we have the thrifty settler; instead of the tepees, thriving cities; instead of the messenger travelling slowly across the prairies we have telephones and telegraphs. The old order has changed. Hundreds of thousands of new citizens are coming every year. The people are forming a great power in the West, and an important matter for the consideration of the people of Canada and the people of the East is, what relationship is that great power in the West to bear to the great power in the East.

The answer must depend upon yourselves. It will depend partly upon the trade relations which will exist between the people of the East and West. It should be the thought of the people of the East to make the trade between East and West advantageous to both East and West, to remove from the people of the West the thought that it will be to their interest not to trade East and West but North and South. How are you going to do that? Span the great wilderness between East and West, cover it with iron rails. The Canadian Pacific Railway is constructed. The Grand Trunk Pacific is to serve that purpose—I am not going to discuss its cost. The Canadian Northern is now being built. But I say this, that they can build all the railways they like, yet unless the rates are such that trade can be advantageously carried from East to West and from West to East those rails will not be kept shining. Consequently the

rates must be considered. Moreover, the tariff must be arranged to fall with equal incidence on the people, East and West, so as to leave no cause for complaint in the West.

Further, the people of the West should follow the lead of the people of Ontario and reduce by manufacturing their surplus products to the least possible bulk and size, and thus have cheaper transportation. Industries should be established there and markets made so that the farmers may have quick and nearby markets for their products, and men may find ample employment in those factories in all the West, at good wages.

But gentlemen, this is not all. You cannot make the West linked to the East through trade relations only. There are now in the West 1,750,000 people, nearly one-fourth of the whole of Canada's population. Where did that population come from? I would like to think that the people of other parts of Canada were going in fast enough to assimilate the people coming in from other countries. But what do the figures show? I have the last returns from the Department of the Interior. There were in 1906 less than 200,000 eastern-born Canadians in the three prairie provinces. What chance have they of assimilating the hundreds of thousands there and coming in? What an undertaking! What a swallow! Two hundred or two hundred and fifty thousand people assimilating the million people who have come in in the last ten years! The lion eats the ox but the lion does not become an ox. He may kill many oxen, till he has gorged himself to satiety, he lies down and looks at what is before him—and quits. Assimilation in the West is out of the question. It must be fusion. Of that new population which has come in inside of the last ten years, say 375,000 was from the British Islands, approximately the same number from the United States, and about 250,000 from continental Europe.

The people coming from the British Islands are distinctly British. The people coming from Europe have become denationalized. The people who have gone into western Canada have not done so from the same motives that brought the Puritans out to Plymouth, the desire to have liberty to worship according to their convictions. Those who now come out come because they have better chances to make money. There is some tendency in the West, as perhaps there is in the East, to become more or less worshippers of the golden calf. They work hardest for the things that are for their material benefit. If the people of the West see a great advantage in trading with the South, and want to do it, what power is there to prevent them? That is another matter for consideration.

I do not like any man to rise in his place, whether private or public, and defame the United States. The United States is a great nation, and we have much to learn from it. They have taught their children to be proud of their country. We should teach our children to be proud of Canada. I have no objection to them looking up to the eagle and applauding as it screams. I have no objection to them worshipping Old Glory and singing about the homes of the "free and the brave," but when they come to Canada and accept all that we are offering them in the way of splendid opportunities they should dispense with their flag-waving. I want them not to forget their country, I pity the man who forgets his native land, for he will never make a loyal Canadian. But when they come over here I would like them to understand that this is another country, that instead of the Stars and Stripes there is another flag, which more than any other means liberty, which wrapped around any citizen of the Empire means protection no matter who he is or where. Then teach their children allegiance to it, and to those great ideals that have been the strength of Britain. Teach them the history of the Empire of which they are now a part.

British foundations have been laid in the northwest, and the newcomers must build upon them, but what is to be the character of the superstructure? Canada and the Canadians of the East must not be supine or complacent concerning it. They must join with similar spirits in the West and be the architects and oversee the building of the national structure as it arises. They must see that not only is it Canadian but British Canadian. It is not sufficient to have the popular faith that Providence watches over children, fools, and Canada. Providence will not do for us what we by effort can do for ourselves. Immediate attention and prompt action are essential. Eternal vigilance will be the price of our national unity, liberty, and strength. While the materials are plastic we must mould them, but let that mould be of a great Canadian nationalism and a splendid world purpose. Let the Canadian churches and people living in the East concentrate their philanthropy and religious effort in establishing and equipping organizations to receive and make at home the newcomers, holding up before them ennobling ideals. Let the local governments see that Canadian teachers of good character, and experts in their work are provided to train the children. Let the Dominion Government provide such railways, and tariff policies as will enable the newcomers to receive full and prompt reward for their effort. Let them stimulate and train all our boys to be not only good home makers but good home de-

fenders, well disciplined, of good physical development, and expert in the use of arms, not for offensive purposes but that as lovers of home and honor they may be courageous defenders of both. Let us all unite in seeing that there is placed before the newcomers and the youth of our country, its high destiny, that of a great and leading nation, more than a single great nation, the greatest nation in the greatest empire ever known. The United States severed its relations with Great Britain and became a great nation. It is not necessary for us to sever our connection with the Empire to become a great nation. That is not our destiny. It is our destiny to become a great nation, it is true—a great strong northern nation, but it is to be as well, the leader in the British Empire. Do not forget that the British Islands have nearly reached the limit of their natural resources, that they cannot expand. They cannot increase their population a great deal, and we are taking away some of their best people. Their commerce is now rivalled by the commerce of the United States, Germany, and Japan, and will soon be rivalled by the commerce of China. You cannot expect the British Islands to do more than they have done. With our magnificent natural resources, our hardy virile people, we may become the greatest people in history. The commercial enterprises and genius of Britain may be transferred to Canada, and the Dominion will become not only a full partner but the senior partner in the Empire. The power of Canada with that of the United Kingdom may be such that when it speaks its voice will mean the peace of the world, and its example followed will mean prosperity. Before our straight path stands an open door. We alone may shut it. Let us not. Beyond that door a crown of national success, of national character! Let no other take it. Pass the portal, wear the crown!