(February 17th, 1913.)

Quebec, Its Early History and Development.

By Hon. Dr. H. S. Beland, M.P.*

AT a regular luncheon of the Canadian Club held on the 17th February, 1913, Hon. Dr. Beland said:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—I prize very highly indeed the honor of being your guest to-day. The pleasure I feel is not entirely unmixed with the sentiment of hesitation, owing undoubtedly to my inability to approach such a vast subject as that of the Province of Quebec, and also perhaps owing to my very incomplete and imperfect knowledge of your beautiful language. (Laughter.)

Though the part played by the Canadian Clubs all over this country is important in many respects, I do not know of any feature of their work which is more conducive to the building up of a true Canadianism than the bringing in contact of citizens of the widely spaced provinces of our beautiful Dominion. (Applause.)

As your worthy Chairman has said, I come from the Province of Quebec, from the old Province of Quebec, and from a remote corner in that old province. Lord Rosebery said at the Coronation luncheon given to the representatives from the Dominions that England was "an elderly lady." Well, the word indeed would well apply to the Province of Quebec, for she is an "elderly lady"; mind you, she was born some four hundred years ago! But I hope that the fact that she is old does not imply that she is lame and crippled. On the contrary, I think she is alive to the true idea of progress and betterment of mankind. (Hear, hear.)

Now, gentlemen, I was asked by your President to speak on the early history and development of the Province of Quebec. Indeed, in the space of the few minutes which are allotted to me it is impossible to go over this ground very completely. I will only, with your kind permission and indulgence,

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try to impress you with some of the outstanding facts of the early history of the Province of Quebec. But let me say at the very outset that the history of the Province of Quebec is the history of your own country Canada (hear, hear); because at the time of the cession of Canada to Great Britain the Province of Quebec was the only thing in this country. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

I think it was in 1535 that Jacques Cartier undertook his venturesome trip to the new continent. Jacques Cartier came at four different times; and the hardships and the difficulties with which he and his companions were then confronted would compare, perhaps, only with those that have been encountered by this great adventurer and explorer of whom we have just heard, Captain Scott. (Applause.)

In those years, you must imagine that the facilities of transportation were very limited, indeed: sailing vessels only were available. The first time that Jacques Cartier came to the American continent he landed on the south shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and went right back. The second time he landed on the north shore; then he proceeded upwards as far as the place which is known as the small village of Montreal. (Laughter.) He came back and spent the winter in Quebec, where he lost most of his companions from that deadly disease known as *scorbut,* scurvy. He came two times after that.

Before the time of Champlain, in the 16th century, there was only one trading post established in the Province of Quebec; that was at Tadoussac, below Quebec. Then let us pass to the 17th century, and the first half of that century was mostly occupied by Champlain—Champlain, the founder of Quebec. There was nothing very important except renewed efforts for settlement, and continuous, almost perpetual, conflicts with Indian tribes. We well realize, we, who are Canadians and know all the beautiful aspects of this country, how the Indians must have felt, living in this realm with these beautiful lakes, these grand rivers, these forests replete with game of all kinds, we realize, I say, how reluctant they must have been to let the white man get hold and dispossess them as it were of this continent. So there were perpetual conflicts between Champlain and his men on the one hand and the Indian tribes on the other.

In 1608 he founded Quebec; he called it Stadacona. The next year there was an Indian raid. In 1610 there was another, and in 1615 another. These were resisted, always successfully resisted, by the French. In 1617, still in the first

half of the 17th century, he landed the first family of settlers, that of Louis Hebert. In 1620 Champlain built what is known as the Chateau St. Louis, which was the residence of our Governors up to 1834.

Then some important companies were formed for fur trading purposes. One of the most important was the Compagnie des Cent Associés, the Company of One Hundred Associates.

But is is not generally known that the Province of Quebec, or Canada, was captured in the 17th century by the English. We know that in 1760 it came under British rule, but it is not commonly known in our beautiful country that the Kirke Brothers took the Province of Quebec and held it for three years, from 1629 to 1632, a hundred and thirty years previous to the cession of Canada to England. Canada belonged to Great Britain three years, but it was rendered back to France.

During that first half of the 17th century Quebec was founded, in 1608; Three Rivers, in 1634; Montreal, in 1642; and also Sorel in 1643. These were the first four *bourgades* established in the Province of Quebec. And the first treaty of peace was signed between the Iroquois and Champlain, the Governor, I think, at all events with the French Governor of the time, in 1645.

Now about that time, 1650, you would probably be interested to know what was the population of Canada: it was about 2,500. (Laughter.) In 1660 there were 2,500 people in Canada,—about the population of the smallest town in the County of Beauce, which I represent. (Laughter.)

Let us continue. The second half of the 17th century was occupied by very big men, indeed. Frontenac, who came to what is to-day Ontario, and founded Fort Cataraqui in 1672, which is to-day the thriving and attractive little city or town of Kingston. And we have some great explorers, French explorers, in that second half of the 17th century; Joliet, Marquette, and La Salle, who desired to know more about this mysterious Western Canada. They went as far as the Mississippi River, and La Salle in 1680 was the first man that sent out on this beautiful Lake Ontario the first sail-vessel. Whether that vessel reached the spot which you now dwell upon, which you inhabit, Toronto, the history does not mention; but Lake Ontario was visited by a sailing vessel for the first time in 1680. (Applause.)

Frontenac and another French Governor, Denonville, carried on quite a few successful expeditions against the Indians.

The second treaty signed between the French and the Indians was in 1701. That is quite important. I mention these treaties only to remind my hearers that the Indians were not, as you know, men of their word; they would not keep faith; they would break their treaties, as they did the first time, because, for instance, a year or two after the first treaty was signed the Indians came in the night and burned Sorel. This was in 1701 that the second treaty was signed. There were also in the first half of the 18th century some English expeditions against Quebec.

In 1750 the population was 55,000 in Quebec, or Canada. Now we have reached that time in our history which some people know well and remember well,—remember, I mean, through their historical studies,—the period of the Seven Years' War, that is, the war in Europe, between the two secular enemies, France and England. That war was declared some time in 1756, I think. By that time there were south of the Province of Quebec, in what is known to-day as the United States-English settlements, as you all know. The war that was precipitated in Europe spread to the American continent, and the English-American colonies invaded the Province of Quebec. Armies also were sent from the Old Country, and you have all present to your memory the eventful days of the battles of Carillon, Montmorency, the Plains of Abraham, and Ste. Foye. We are all still filled with the remembrance of the valor and bravery of those English and French soldiers. Those deeds of theirs are couched in golden letters in Canadian history, and the city of Quebec has erected a monument to both heroes, Wolfe and Montcalm, (applause) stating that that monument was erected to their valor, to their fame, by history, and by posterity. The lot went against the French, Montreal capitulated, and the Province of Quebec, or Canada, was handed over three years later to Great Britain.

Now at that time there were 60,000 French in Canada; sixty thousand Canadians; and those sixty thousand Canadians produced, without the help of any important immigration, the wonderful population of two millions to-day! (Laughter and applause.) That is a fact that proves indeed more than anything I could say of the fecundity of the French-Canadian woman.

The first years of the English régime were indeed pretty hard for the Frenchmen. They were stripped of their civil laws, as you know, and were subjected to the arbitrary government of the Governor and his advisers. The Quebec Act,

eleven years later, brought relief to the Frenchmen. England was at all times, I think, a generous country. (Applause.) It was at all events in 1774, that the French were permitted the free exercise of their religion, and were also relieved of the oath of test, which was very, very objectionable to a man of the Catholic faith. Now, is it surprising that, a few months or a year after, when Washington issued a proclamation from the rebels in the American colonies to the French population of Quebec—is it wonderful that they resisted his appeal? Is it wonderful that when Lafayette and Rochambault, two French generals allied with the rebels in the United States, came to beg the French-Canadians to join the movement, they resisted? (Applause.) They resisted at that time as one man; and perhaps I might open a parenthesis here, and say that at all times since 1775, through all kinds of difficulties, and hardships, in the most gloomy days of their history, never did the French as a whole, as a population, try to secede from their allegiance to Great Britain. (Applause.)

You remember that at that time the Loyalists had moved from the United States into Canada; thus you had two populations, two races, in Canada, the French and the English. The English had settled mostly in the eastern townships and what is known to-day as the Province of Ontario. And that brought about the Constitutional Act of 1791, dividing Canada into two provinces, Upper and Lower, each provided with a constitutional government, but also the Governor and his Council were clothed with a good deal of arbitrary authority still, and there was witnessed a fight in each province between the House and the Governor and his Council. And that fight was carried on from 1791 till 1837, when it culminated in rebellion, led by French and English alike.

And that brings me to the report of Lord Durham, and that brings me to the Union, consummated, as you know, in 1841. The Union was imposed upon the Province of Quebec, and the Province of Quebec dreaded it; dreaded it because though it had the majority, a large majority, of the population, it was to have the same number of representatives in the United Parliament as the other Province. But after the Act of Union was an accomplished fact, the Province of Quebec, the Frenchmen, rallied to it, and their leaders at that time, one especially, Lafontaine, thought that the proper policy to follow was to unite with the English patriot Baldwin, and labor with him to secure the fullest measure of comfort and political development. (Applause.)

The population of Quebec in 1844 was 698,000. Now we have come to a day most important in the history of Quebec and of Canada, the time of Confederation; and your President, in writing me the invitation, asked me to give what had been the main reasons assigned for or against Confederation by the Province of Quebec.

Let me tell you immediately, the Province of Quebec never seriously objected to Confederation. The man who personified the aspirations of the Quebec population in 1863 and immediately before, was Sir George Etienne Cartier, and, as you know, he was a firm adherent of Confederation. Not only was he an adherent of Confederation, but he was an advocate of Confederation.

What were the main reasons he had for Confederation? First, he thought it was the only way of resisting annexation to the United States, which were at that date torn by civil war. The second reason assigned by Cartier was that it was the only proper way to establish permanently British Dominion on the northern half of North America. And the third reason put forward by Sir George Etienne Cartier, who spoke for the Province of Quebec, was that it was only by that confederated system that the privileges and aspirations of the Catholic population of Quebec could be secured and realized. Sir George was not in favor of a legislative union. Most of the politicians of Ontario were in favor of it, but they were brought by Cartier's convincing powers to favor a federated system; and the whole Province of Quebec rallied the following election to the policy of Cartier, only a few members being returned to the Confederation Parliament in opposition to Mr. Cartier.

Now the reasons assigned against Confederation by the Province of Quebec were not considered at that time weighty. There was more political opposition than real argumentative opposition. The Maritime Provinces were also taken into Confederation,—New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and a special guarantee had to be offered to induce them to join.

Now I have, I think, finished that part of my remarks which consists in telling you in as few words as possible and at long strides of the establishment period, from Cartier to the cession of Canada to Great Britain. I have also finished that part of my remarks which I would call the political part of our history, from the cession to Confederation. From Confederation to this day I would call the commercial part of our development.

I was asked to give you in as few words as possible the nature of the natural resources of the Province of Quebec. Let me tell you, Quebec, as any other country in the world, has, as its natural resources, land, water powers, forests, mines and fisheries. We excel in two: water powers and forests. Let me give you, for instance, something about our water powers: Quebec has 3,700,000 available H.P., in round numbers three and a half million H.P. available; out of that amount, 300,000 H.P. only is developed. These water-powers are mainly situated on the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa River, the St. Maurice River, the Saguenay, with their tributaries; others being on the Batiscan River, on the north, with the tributaries to Lake St. John, the Richelieu, Yamaska, St. Francis, and Chaudiere Rivers, on the south.

Now the other natural resource which is paramount, I think, in the Province of Quebec is the forests. I would estimate the forest wealth of the Province of Quebec at about 150,000,000 acres; out of which 111,000,000 acres are in forest reserves to-day. (Applause.) The total area of the Province of Quebec is 220,000,000 acres; so more than one half is forest, and almost two-thirds, perhaps more, of the forest is in reserves, and I think it is an admirable showing. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, the question of preserving our forests is a problem confronting Canada to-day, not only Quebec. Our forests have been depleted and denuded by very ill-advised cutting and exploitation. But in these reserves the Quebec Government's cutting is methodical, and if regulations are strictly adhered to as they are to-day the reserves are considered likely to be a perpetual asset. (Hear, hear.)

Indeed, if you consider that the water powers and the forests are the basis of one of the greatest industries of the age, the pulp and paper industry, I say that among all the natural resources of Quebec, if you single out two kinds, water and spruce, you will have not only one of the most important industries of Canada, but one of the most important in the world to-day.

Now, what about land? I have only four minutes left me. (Cries of "Go on.") The land of the Province of Quebec produced in field crops last year $100,000,000 worth in hay, oats, potatoes, and so forth. The dairy produced $30,000,000. The dairy industry is very thriving in Quebec; there are 3,000 butter and cheese factories.

Now I come to the mines. We give way before Nova Scotia and Ontario. The whole mining product of last year was about eight and a half million dollars' worth. But there

is one particular feature of our mining which I want to bring to your attention: it is the asbestos production. Quebec has the largest asbestos mines in the world, and produces 90 per cent. of the world's supply. (Applause.) There is only one other country in the world, that is Russia, which produces a very limited amount of asbestos, and of an inferior quality; whilst our asbestos, as you know, is of the very best quality.

As a manufacturing district the Province of Quebec stands second only to Ontario in our Dominion. With over 5,000 establishments it turned out over 300 million dollars' worth of products last year.

Commercial and technical education have received of late a great impetus from the local authorities, and I would invite you to visit our Commercial and technical schools in all our principal cities and towns.

Quebec has realized also that a highly perfected system of highways is the barometer of progress. A very progressive policy has been in force for a few years, and before a decade the province will boast of public roads which will be a credit to the whole Dominion.

Now I think I have come to that part of my remarks, when I should conclude. What is the greatest asset of the Province of Quebec? ("People," said some.) Some of you think it is the French-Canadian woman! (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Not at all! She is indeed charming and precious; but the greatest asset of the Province of Quebec, and for that matter of Canada, is the great waterway, the St. Lawrence River (applause), especially when you think that one-third of the whole Canadian trade is borne on the bosom of the St. Lawrence; when you think that eight hundred ocean-going vessels have plied over its waters last season; that it is at the head of ocean navigation, and at the foot of inland navigation. Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Canadian Club, it is beautiful, it is useful, we could not do without it! As you sail up the St. Lawrence from the Gulf, and as you curve in from the channel south of the Island of Orleans, what do you see? You behold that imposing rock of Quebec, that rock which was the advanced sentinel of France for three centuries, and which is to-day the advanced sentinel of Great Britain and has been for a hundred and fifty years. Around that rock and on top of it and behind it is the solid, sturdy, frugal population composed of the French-Canadians! (Applause.)

I was asked by your Chairman to try to outline what was the part played by the Province of Quebec in rounding out Confederation. Well, I do not know that the Province of

Quebec has played any particular rôle, but if it has it is that it has by the conservatism of its population helped to exercise what I would call a restraining influence, a discouraging factor, against any demagogic practices of some other countries in the world. Its population has for a hundred and fifty years been attached to the British Crown. And I don't know of any power in the world, demagogic or otherwise, that would induce the French population to sever their connection with the British Empire. (Applause.)