

(March 4th, 1912.)

British Columbia and its Relation to Confederation.

BY HON. MARTIN BURRELL.*

AT a regular meeting of the Canadian Club, held on March 4th, 1912, Hon. Martin Burrell said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I need hardly say in the first place, that it is a pleasure to come back again to Toronto, where I have had very many pleasant associations in the past, and where you are kind enough to continually send so many stalwart recruits to our side of the House—if I may touch on political questions at all. It must be a justification of those who formed these Canadian Clubs that they are doing such good work all over Canada. It is a pleasure to come into this non-political, non-resolving—if I may use that word—this calm, judicial atmosphere. My only regret is that I can't smoke and talk at the same time, or I should be doing it. I reaffirm my own conviction that the chief aim of these clubs is being achieved, because they are distinctly educational, not only to the members of the club, but to those who have to go around and speak to them—we are taught to say something more than narrow parochialisms, to bring seriously to these clubs what will go to help the full realization of the solidarity of the Canadian people.

I want to disarm any hostile criticism in advance, by saying that I am not in good shape to make a speech to a Canadian Club as big and important as this. You can understand how tremendously pressed Ministers are at this time of the year, so I could not give time to the working up of a speech. I had hoped to have a chance to come at another time of the year, but your President was so insistent, so kindly and extremely suave, that I found it almost impossible to refuse to come now. A certain Governor of Bengal was noted for his extreme suavity and politeness. On one occasion a notorious criminal named Enoch Brown was to be hanged at 1 o'clock on a certain day. The Governor was to be present, but later found himself com-

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pelled to be elsewhere at that hour. He sent a note to Mr. Brown, reading thus: "The Governor of Bengal presents his compliments to Mr. Enoch Brown, and finding he has to go to another appointment in the afternoon would like to know if it would be equally convenient for Mr. Brown to be hanged at 10 o'clock." Politeness is irresistible. Brown was hanged at 10 o'clock. And so, sir, I have come, at all events sooner than I expected, whether to be hanged or not remains to be seen. (Laughter.)

I also understand you are kind enough to ask me to speak on a non-controversial subject,—the historical features of the development of our Province. It is rather pleasant to leave the stormy atmosphere of fierce criticism, though I believe that even my friend Mr. Duff here is not entirely relieved from it—(laughter)—it is pleasant to deal with those things that have passed away,—there have been calumnies and harsh criticisms in the past, but "de mortuis nil nisi bonum"; if you can say nothing good, better say nothing at all, even of the living.

History is not concerned with individuals, say some people, except in their capacity as members of the State; this may be true, but I think we shall admit this to be true also, that if the presentation of history were unrelieved by the storm and stress of personal affairs, of human passion, it would be a pretty dry affair, which we should have little wish to study. We are not attracted by what we may call the severe school of historians. There are a great many schools of historians, a great many types of writers. One holds that history is, as Carlyle says, "an imprisoned epic," and that the history of mankind is simply the history of great men, and that to find them out, to clear away the dirt off them, and put them on their proper pedestals, is the real function of the historian. Another school is represented by Tolstoi. These believe that great men are to be accepted as the product of their times, that these events and conditions were simply directed, not created, by the men who achieved prominence. Still another type is that of the historian Green, who held that in relating the words and doings of the common people, in their daily life, showing how they lived and how they faced their problems, moral and social, you are doing better than by picturing the peculiar characteristics of great men. So I think we shall agree on a happy medium: you have to summarize your study of the great men and the common people to arrive at anything like a sound conclusion as to the true development of a nation or a State.

I must apologize for thus dealing with matters that seem to have no connection with British Columbia; probably it seems rather a fraud for me to attempt to speak when I have

no time to deal with the historical features of the Province as I would like, and must give only a disjointed sketch. One does not know how much to assume that you know, but though it is dangerous to traverse stale ground, it is equally dangerous to presuppose that every gentleman here is fully enlightened about my Province. I have had some very rude shocks lately while loitering in England, where I discovered that some people had the feeblest knowledge as to where British Columbia was or what it was. In the good old city of York there was a big exhibition, where I was in charge of a fruit exhibit from British Columbia, and near me was a magnificent collection of grain from the prairie. A reporter of a Yorkshire paper—and reporters are an unusually intelligent and highly trained class of the community—told me he would give me an excellent write-up. But next morning my federal friends asked me, with very glum visages, what I had been doing to the reporter the night before; he had said in his report that "there were two great features of the show in the form of fine exhibits of fruit and grain from two of the greatest of the British colonies, Canada and British Columbia." Other evidences rather disillusioned me about presuppositions. One instance was at Exeter, at another great exhibition, where a reporter undertook to write it up, and he did it justice. "At the end of the hall," he said, "was the California fruit exhibit, under the direction of the Agent-General for British Columbia." One more instance: I have still in my possession a thing which I treasure much, a map printed under the auspices of the Geographical Society of Scotland,—it was printed at Edinburgh, and is in colors to show the character of the religious denominations in Canada; bright red marks the Roman Catholic portion, then pink the Protestants, and a dark sooty color for the heathen; starting at the Atlantic, Quebec is bright red, then pink begins to be very much in evidence, and gradually as you go on west there is more pink and the red disappears from the scene, but then the atmosphere grows distinctly sooty, until you come to British Columbia, where it is almost all a sooty black. (Laughter.)

In the little, hurried sketch I can give of the historical development of our Province, I will deal broadly with three great periods: the first, that of its earlier history, during which there were the searches for the Northwest passage, including many voyages, up to that of Captain Vancouver, in the coast waters and various Arctic explorations; secondly, the fur-trading period, beginning with the granting of the charter in 1670 to the Hudson's Bay Company; and thirdly, the period characterized by the long diplomatic controversy between Russia, Great Bri-

tain and the United States, concerning the delimitation of boundaries and the possession of disputed territories.

Our genial friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, used to say that all generous minds have a horror of statistics, but I am sure you will forgive the quotation of a few necessary dates. An excellent summary of the earlier history of British Columbia by Mr. R. E. Gosnell, to which I am indebted, is in the Year Book of 1903.

It was in the year 1537 that California was discovered by Cortez and his band of Spanish captains. Forty years later Sir Francis Drake sailed into these western seas, plundering the Spaniards, and after wintering on the coast started for home laden with spoil, but under stress of weather, and partly to escape the enemy he turned north, and cast anchor for five weeks near what is now San Francisco, where in the pleasant fashion of those days he set up the British flag, took possession of the whole coast in the name of Queen Elizabeth, and called the country New Albion. It is curious to note that three centuries later one of the claims to the Oregon territory set up by England was founded on this very act of Drake's. In 1592 a Greek navigator who later took the name of Juan de Fuca, then in the employ of the Spaniards in Mexico, made a voyage north and entered the waters leading to the Strait of Georgia between Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia. These waters are still known as the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Then we come to 1778, when Captain Cook, of famous memory, arrived with his two ships, the "Resolution" and the "Discovery," under instructions from the British Government to examine the coast from the 45th parallel to the Arctic. He sailed north to the Arctic Ocean, passing through Behring Strait, which he so named after the Danish navigator who discovered it thirty years earlier. Cook's stories of the wealth of this western country, especially in its rich furs, fired the imagination of European adventurers and stimulated the remarkable enterprises which characterized subsequent years. Among these were a great many enterprises purely of adventure, and many of discovery, some official and some distinctly unofficial. Spain still exercised its power in the west, and about 1790 a Spanish expedition arrived in Nootka in the northern waters, confiscated the British vessels, and took possession in the name of the King of Spain. A great deal of controversy took place, and heavy indemnity was demanded by Great Britain, and restitution was made by Spain. To carry out the terms of the convention was one of the reasons of the notable voyage of Captain Vancouver, who arrived on the coast in 1792. A

thorough survey of the coast line followed, a survey setting many questions at rest, and in the names of Vancouver and Vancouver Island to-day we have a permanent remembrance of one of the foremost figures of those early days.

The arrival of the Hudson's Bay steamer "Beaver" in 1835 by way of the Horn marked another phase of Pacific coast history, but by this time the discovery days were over, and a coastwise traffic established. Then came other factors in the development of the West in the shape of explorations overland from the east, the most notable being that of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, an officer of the Northwest Fur Company, who followed the great river which now bears his name to the Arctic, and in a later exploration the Peace River, and going westward reached the Pacific coast at Bella Coola in 1793. This memorable journey led the way for the great fur-trading commerce, and was thereby instrumental in winning for Great Britain what is now the Province known as British Columbia.

An almost equally important expedition in its historical bearings was that of Lewis and Clark in the employ of the United States Government in 1804. This expedition, ostensibly scientific, but with definite aims of another character, reached the mouth of the Columbia River in 1805, and it had very much to do with the claims of the United States to the Oregon territory, which were finally settled after years of controversy by the Ashburton treaty in 1846.

Into that vexed question one cannot enter now. We have all heard of the supposed disregard by British diplomacy of the claims of British interests, a disregard best illustrated by the well-worn story of the official who said "the salmon won't rise to the fly, and the whole country is no good." There is very much to be said on the other side of this question of British diplomacy; my own firm belief is that in spite of mistakes the history of British diplomacy has been very far from the record of blunders and incompetencies which some people assert in so airy a way. Perhaps this would not be an inopportune time to quote a few words on this subject from a man particularly eminent in the political field, a statesman whose standing in the Empire none questions. I refer to Sir Edward Grey's speech before the Press Conference in June, 1909. He said: "I deprecate strongly any idea that the Foreign Office is more ready to compromise with foreign countries where the interests of colonies are concerned than where our own interests are concerned. And I am quite convinced of this, that though now and then a self-governing Dominion beyond the seas may think that in some settlement with a foreign country the British Foreign Office has not been stiff enough in uphold-

ing British interests, if they could only have access to, or if they could only read the blue books giving an account of the negotiations with foreign countries in which any colonial interest was directly concerned, they would find that where we have made cessions of territory they have not been those which belonged to the self-governing colonies." "But compromise," he concluded—and this is a word which should sink deeply into the heart of every Canadian—"is surely one of the things essential to every great Empire. If we were to assert the extreme letter of everything which we claim, the British Empire would become impossible."

Now let me revert for a moment to the great fur-trading system, which is so intimately connected with the history and development of British Columbia, without which indeed there might not have been any British Columbia. A Montreal firm known as the Northwest Company is to be credited with the first permanent settlement in British Columbia, that of Fort St. James, on Stuart's Lake, in the north of Cariboo. This district, which I have the honor to represent, is none of your little pocket boroughs, but stretches from the international boundary to the Yukon, quite a tidy little riding, equal to half of Ontario, I mean Ontario as at present in extent, for there is apparently to be a bigger Ontario soon. The Hudson's Bay Company, which obtained its charter from Charles II. in 1670, the charter giving powers of an exclusive character to Hudson Bay and its contiguous territory, was pushing its operations westward, and—without going into the discussion of the long struggles between these two great companies, struggles leading to endless rancor and sometimes bloodshed, it may be stated that a coalition of the companies was brought about in 1821, when a new Royal license was issued giving the new company the sole rights to the great fur trade of the Northwest. The new company took the name of the older organization, and from this time on the history of the Hudson's Bay Company was the history of the whole country.

The system was operated under the direction of Chief Factors, men of great energy, and of a high order of training, and wielding enormous powers industrial and social, and possessing extraordinary knowledge of the whole country. Besides carrying on the fur trade, operating over an immense extent of territory, the Company raised horses and cattle, had large farms, grist mills, fisheries, exported flour and merchandise to Alaska, hides and wool to England, and opened up the great coal mines at Nanaimo. Of these men, one of the most powerful and one who practically witnessed the transition period when the Hudson's Bay Company passed from its former

character into that of an ordinary modern commercial trading company, was James Douglas, a man destined to exercise a singular influence over the far West. It was during the negotiations concerned with the delimitation of the international boundary fixed in 1846 at the 49th parallel, that the Hudson's Bay Company, fearing that its posts below the 49th parallel would be sacrificed, determined to select a new central post, and James Douglas was chosen for the work. Accustomed to responsibility, familiar to an extraordinary degree with the western coast, resourceful, and wonderfully tactful, the new Factor finally selected ten square miles on Vancouver Island at Camosun. Camosun at first, it became later Prince Albert, and finally acquired its present name Victoria, to-day the capital city of British Columbia.

In the grants from the Imperial Government to the Hudson's Bay Company conditions were inserted which gave it power to carve out territories and to make new colonies if it so wished, independent from Upper or Lower Canada. This led to the establishment of Vancouver Island as a separate colony, and later on to the establishment of New Caledonia on the mainland. It was in 1849 that Vancouver Island was declared a British colony open for colonization. Richard Blanshard was chosen as the first Governor, but he was not the man for the position, having no strong characteristics, and very shortly after James Douglas, whose great abilities were known, was taken by the Imperial authorities for the responsibilities of this new task, in 1851. Then as the population increased there was a basis for elective franchise, and a Representative Assembly was called together, the first parliament lasting from 1856 to 1859.

Meanwhile New Caledonia had had its name changed to British Columbia, though it was still Indian territory under the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company. But in 1858 the new colony of British Columbia was proclaimed, with Governor Douglas as its Governor also, and the capital was placed at Queensborough, later called New Westminster. Fights between various factions and rivalry between the two capitals led in 1860 to the union of the two colonies under the name of British Columbia, with the capital at Victoria.

There were those who fought bitterly and hard against the entrance of British Columbia into Confederation. Others felt, I think rightly, that the consolidation of the Provinces must come, to round out the Confederation into anything worthy of the name, and that it was wise and patriotic to join the far West and the far East in one strong union. So in 1871 British Columbia turned another page in its varied history, and entered

on its new career as the great westerly Province of the Dominion of Canada.

The subsequent history of our Province has been one largely of development and exploration, of development accompanied by difficulties of an extraordinary character, stamped with romance and adventure all through, largely owing to the natural configuration of the country. And here one may ask again what and where is British Columbia? It is a country of mountainous character, approximately 700 miles long from north to south, by 400 miles wide, embracing a territory larger now than any other Province, practically three times the size of the whole of the Maritime Provinces, three or four times as big as the whole Empire of Japan, an empire in fact itself. Its eastern limit is marked by a line which pierces the centre of the range of the Rockies. On its southern boundary are the northern portions of the great States of Montana, Idaho, and Washington, and it stretches northward through a vast hinterland, practically unexplored, to the far-famed Yukon. As a watershed on the Pacific coast, its importance is marked by the fact that all the great rivers which flow into the Pacific except one—the Colorado—rise within its borders. The Columbia traverses the Province for hundreds of miles before finding its way southward through the United States and spilling its great volume of waters into the Pacific in Oregon. The Fraser stretches for 750 miles through British Columbia territory, and in addition we have the Skeena (300 miles), the Stikine, the Laird, and the Peace Rivers.

It is a country essentially of superlatives. I am almost afraid to begin talking in superlatives, to tell you of the mountains, of the rivers, the fish, the men, and everything else,—all are big. I don't know whether it is safe to say more. Our friends in the East say we are prone to brag. I am willing to admit that the farther west you go the taller your talk becomes. Perhaps this is only the defect of a quality. This breezy exaggeration is just a defect of the quality of stern, robust optimism that believes the future is bright, that is rooted so firmly in the mind because in facing Nature in its raw, terrible, undeveloped state, it realizes that only by the hardest resolution can Nature be conquered. This resolution and this faith tend to that which others call braggartism.

In a country which is practically ninety per cent. mountainous, one of the first great tasks which confronts the people is road building. Sir James Douglas showed in that more clearly than in anything else his marvellous grasp of the country's necessities: he started under his regime the great system of roads through the Kootenay country, and to the Cariboo dis-

trict. He knew, as Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, what easy communication meant to the development of that country. While it is true that in the past an enormous amount of work was done by your pioneers in opening up this part of the Dominion, the early settlers of the West had a colossal work as compared with your own. There miles of road, costing often thousands of dollars, had to be constructed to one little remote settlement. Little bands of pioneers scattered all over were crying insistently for roads. After all, it is our duty in British Columbia, as in the far east,—there is an obligation upon us who are in more fortunate circumstances—to stretch out a helping hand to those pioneers, isolated, cut off from kith and kin, who are doing the foundation work for the Canada of the future.

As to development in British Columbia since Confederation,—the practical importance was realized of first opening up the interior of the country. After the excitement of the gold rush of '49 to California had died down, people began to dream of and hear the call to a new El Dorado in the gold-bearing Cariboo District. There is plenty of romance there. I have talked with men who have never seen a railway, who have never been down from there since 1862 to the present day. They have realized not only enormous hardships, fording ice-cold rivers at imminent risk of death, penetrating almost impenetrable forests, but have been cut off from all the things they valued. But one of the things which has characterized this country, making it different from other mining countries, is the marvellous law and order, due partly to the instinctive love of those early settlers for what is right and just, also partly to the fact that such men as I have referred to, men a little of the James Douglas type, were prominent in the early days; such too as Sir Matthew Begbie, who was Chief Justice, a man of force of character and great knowledge of men, absolutely fearless and tactful, who went up into the Yale-Cariboo District twenty or thirty times. Among the stories told to illustrate the character of this man who meant so much to the orderliness of the country is one of a certain rascally bravado from the other side of the line, who appeared before the Chief Justice for some offence. The Judge was a man of few words. He tried the man and said in concluding, "I'll fine you \$50." The fellow said in an easy manner, "That's all right, Judge, I have that in my breeches pocket!" "And six months," added the Judge, "have you that in your breeches pocket?" Another story relates to a time just before Sir Matthew Begbie died. A man was up for sandbagging somebody, an entirely plain case. The jury's sympathies were worked on, as they are sometimes,

and the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty." "You are let off, it is true," said the Judge to the prisoner, "this jury, to my amazement and disgust, has said you are not guilty. The best advice I can give you is to go home, get your sandbag, and sandbag the jurymen!"

I must not touch on the history of placer mining in British Columbia leading up to the development of our lode mining. Just subsequent to that began the development of the agricultural and horticultural interests of the interior. It is claimed that British Columbia will be the great Province of the Dominion, especially for horticultural work. There is something of romance also here. I have seen some of the first fruit trees which were brought in and planted in the Province, still alive and bearing. They were brought hundreds of miles on horseback over the trail, at great risk of life and limb, and are there still, to be witnesses to the energy and faith of the people settling in British Columbia in those early days, and their belief in the possibilities of the country. When I went out there first, in 1899, there were only 7,000 acres in orchard, to-day there are between 100,000 and 120,000 acres, and there is developing a very big and important industry indeed.

In the links which have bound us together, of all kinds, we have greatly developed a very strong and robust Canadian sentiment: we are Canadians in the best sense of that word. Previous to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway we were isolated; you knew little of us in the East, and we knew little of your aims and aspirations; we were intensely British, our whole traditions were British, and we had an intense aspiration to live out and perpetuate in the best way British institutions. That link has been a great thing not only for us but for you. Those twin rails of steel, which meant so much commercially in the interchange of traffic between the Canadian brother West of the Rockies and the Canadian brother of the East, meant much in the binding together of kith and kin, and has helped to make us what we are to-day, truly one nation, with the same aims and aspirations.

It is perfectly true that our conditions are somewhat different to yours. It is equally true, that what makes for your welfare makes for ours, and what hurts us must hurt you. You cannot do a thing which is bad for us out there without injuring that part of the Dominion which is in the East, and anything which seriously hurts you must also cripple the great outposts. Therefore, though our problems are different from yours, you are coming daily to feel a great vital interest in the problems of British Columbia. You are getting a larger vision, you see the country as one. No man can say what the develop-

ment of that Province may be. With the completion of the Panama Canal in 1915, it is impossible to forecast what strange shifting and adjusting there may be. We on the Pacific coast believe there will be an enormous expansion of industry on the coast, and also a readjusting of energies all over the country, and the enterprise and energy that characterizes this city of Toronto should not, and I believe will not, be behind in that readjusting of industrial conditions in the next two years.

One word on the great problem of Oriental immigration. I am going to say only one word with reference to it. I have during the past few years spoken a good deal on that subject, largely on the Japanese phase, but necessarily also on some others. You thoroughly understand that there are two absolutely distinct phases of the question as presented. There are the people from India, and the matter as it affects them is more purely economic than as regards the others. Many of these people who have come over, and many of those left behind, have rendered great service to the British Empire, and yet, gentlemen, we must also recognize the fact that in the face of those teeming millions of India, an enormous mass, not altogether homogeneous, but a multitude with fundamentally different traditions and ideals from the British, it must be a very serious matter to think of relaxing any conditions which might help to open the door to a great influx of these people, much as we admire their services in the past. No harsh word should be said of those who would open the door, and certainly no harsh word should be said of those who believe it should be kept closed. The question should be approached in the broadest possible spirit. Needless antagonisms should not add to the difficulties of the problem which has to be faced by our statesmen.

The Japanese and Chinese question from economic as well as from national reasons is of immense importance to us; you do not begin to grasp it, because you are not face to face with it; but if you here in the East were to be in the condition of British Columbia, you would have a better understanding of the problem. Look at the census—(I speak with bated breath of this authority, for I see that you think you have been credited by my Department with a considerably smaller population than you claim to have in Toronto)—if you found from 20 to 30 per cent. of your own white race withdrawn and supplanted by these Oriental races, who were entering the economic field and disturbing your conditions, you would look at this question in an entirely different light. We look across those intervening waters and see the teeming millions, of different tongues, of alien traditions and religions, absolutely

different in social structure, we realize that with our sparse population we are keeping watch and ward for you on the Pacific coast, holding that land for our children's children, as a great British-English-speaking country. We must be reluctant to open the door in any way to those races, when we know the impossibility of fusing that kind of type into the body politic or assimilating it in such a way as will make for a homogeneous social structure in the far West.

I am aware no man should open his mouth on this great question without great reluctance and hesitancy and without deep earnestness. I am not saying that those who are dealing with this question are not trying to do so temperately, moderately, wisely, I believe this is going to be the dominant question of the British Empire in the future—this problem of immigration. Statesmen realize that it is one of the great problems, the relation of the far East to the West. Therefore, it is the duty of every man to bring his best thought and energy to help towards the solution of this question in the very best spirit. I believe you wish to see the far West Province, a great, healthy, lusty Province, developed by the same forces and inhabited by the same types as those that have inhabited and developed your own East, with the same aspirations and ideals, working with you hand in hand and heart to heart for the good of our common country. (Applause.)