

CANADA A NATION

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Copyright by Publishers Press, 1910. The most interesting thing in connection with the Dominion of Canada is its future. The present, relatively speaking, is no great matter. Whatever our native conceits may prompt us to think of our own importance, we have no claim to bulk very large

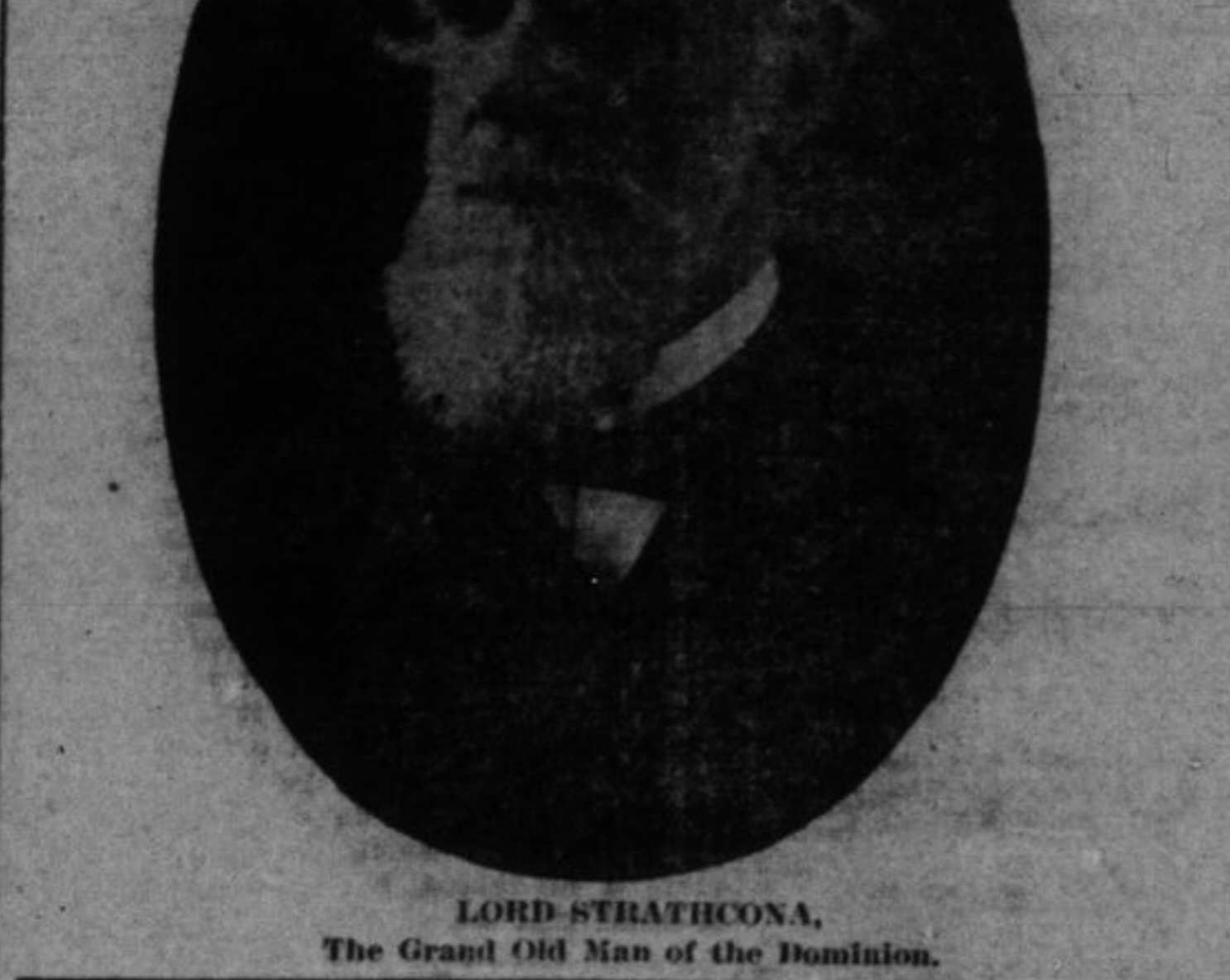


PROF. STEPHEN LEACOCK, B.A., Ph.D.

in the eyes of the outer world. We number in all some seven and a half million people, which puts us from the point of view of the census taker, in the same class as Roumania or one of the lesser provinces of China. In the broad course of the world's history, save for one moment when the fate of Europe was affected by the capture of Quebec, we have counted for very little. In arts and letters we have counted for nothing at all. Our only claim to eminence is as a land of promise, a country of the future. But here, our claim is great. Look

at the four corners of the British empire, and that even now it has become necessary in that, and to make some change in the design and conduct of our common imperial government. But there are many of us who do not see the future in this light, who feel that it will be incumbent on us to adopt, sooner or later, in all peace and harmony, an independent status consistent, as they think, with our material power and greatness. Some few of us, perhaps, still hold to the older theory, of a natural destiny of absorption into the United States, and cherish the vision of a United North America, speaking but a single tongue and held in common by a united nation. This cast of opinion, that has drifted of late years into the background, is liable at any time, owing to our lack of a common political purpose to undergo a recrudescence.

It is not, however, the purpose of the present article, to discuss the various political alternatives that are thus opened to us, but to speak of us in our internal aspect and to see what will be the necessary conditions and environment of the Canadian nation, inside or outside of the British empire. In the first place we note that the word nation is ambiguous and perplexing. Many of us in Canada have hesitated to use it for fear of its conveying a false connotation. Strictly speaking it ought to imply the bond of common blood and descent. The Roman empire, a single state, contained not one but many nations. South Africa and Canada contain each two nations, or rather, parts of them. The word is also used to convey an exact, by opposite sense and to indicate not the tie of blood, but the status of political independence. But apart from these two meanings and for want of a better term, we have come in Canada to use the word to mean a community of people economically and politically united but not necessarily independent of the outside world. Nationalism begins when the internal progress and economic development of country



LORD STRATHCONA, The Grand Old Man of the Dominion.

means to restrict an overgreat influx, we shall find that within ten years a season of plenty and of prosperity will bring a million people to Canada. Now let us consider whether this increasing population will direct itself, geographically our situation is peculiar. East and west Canada faces the two great oceans, northward it sets its back against the frozen seas, but southward it lies contiguous on the whole length with the United States, for hundreds of miles absolutely frontierless. The geographical divisions run north and south. The maritime provinces lie side by side with New England. Ontario and Quebec are separated from the west by the rugged and inhospitable country of the north shore and communicate at every point with the republic either directly or across the great lakes. The prairie country has no boundary against Dakota and its sister states, while the passage to British Columbia is blocked by the great barrier of the Rocky mountains. Worse than all, the downward projection of the Hudson and James Bay well nigh cuts our dominion in two, penetrating it at the very point where settlement lies most thickly. All through our history, till yesterday, this formation lent colour to the theory of a manifest destiny of union with the American republic. We seemed to have length without breadth—a nation lying along a shoe string. But we are coming now to see that the case is not as bad as it seemed. The thin-drawn aspect of our settlement was not a consequence of climate and soil so much as of communications. Convenient access could be had to Canada only by the St. Lawrence or from the American border. The north shore of the St. Lawrence from Montreal to Quebec is probably no better suited for settlement than the banks of the Athabasca or the Peace, but the one district was accessible, the other not. Hence the Canadian population spread itself thinly along its line of communication like the vanguard of an army on the march.

This is changing now. The striking feature of the present moment is the northern advance of Canadian settlement. Our climate easily permits it. We have got away at last, from the hope of the "acres of snow" and the "Christmas-in-Canada" pictures of the London press. Lay down the British Isles on the map of this country and the bottom end of them is slung up as far north as Winnipeg. The isothermal line that marks the growth of the valuable timber of the temperate zone and the northern edge of the cereal belt, hangs low, it is true, in the centre of the dominion, but sweeps westward in a generous and ascending curve till it crosses the valley of the Peace nearly 100 miles above the American frontier. Quebec has a vast northern hinterland which we are reaching already through the valley of the Saguenay. For the production of power, this district, in which the Hamilton river alone has a potential development of 9,000,000 horse power, is perhaps unsurpassed in the world. We are soon to see large Canadian cities set far from the frontier and obviously no mere adjuncts of the settlement of the United States. The Johannesburg of Canada will be beside Lake Temiscaming, Edmonton will be the great rail-road centre and distributing point of the far north and we shall have in Prince Rupert a Pacific seaport a



SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD, The Grand Statesman of Confederation.

ple with all the forceful aspiration and eager daring of a new country, will lack perhaps that restraining influence exercised by the existence of a common history. If such an ill-omened day should dawn, it is all over with the confederation of Canada. One other point, too, of great importance should never be forgotten in considering the future development of the Canadian nation. Racially, we are not a single but a dual people, having among us two languages and, as our background, the history of two great European nations. Many of those who have loved Canada best have failed to appreciate the meaning of this. They have chafed at what they think the "initial blemish" of the conquest when the French language was tolerated by the victors; as if indeed a mere handful of British officers and Scotch traders, on the strength of a fist from Downing street, could have altered the tongue of 60,000 French settlers. Ever since the conquest, the disappearance of the French language in Canada has been the subject of patriotic expectation in the part of a mistaken section of the British people.

First it was hoped that somehow, the military, the ally of King George on the coins and principle of allegiance itself, would conjure it out of the country. Lord Durham proposed to spirit away the French nationality with the presto change of a provincial union. After him consideration was to be accomplished. And in our own time the same feat is to be performed on what is called business principles, meaning, one may presume, the importation of hats and dry goods by commercial drummers who speak no French and who drive the French Canadian shop keeper to learn English in sheer despair. The thing cannot be done. The disappearance of the French language or the amalgamation of the races if it is ever to come, lies beyond the furthest range of our foresight. At the conquest the French numbered some 60,000 to 70,000. At the union of 1840 their number had reached 450,000. At the end of the nineteenth century 1,649,000. Including the French-Canadian settlers of the United States the race now reaches a total of about 2,000,000 a people. From the mother province of Quebec they are extending along the Ontario side of the valley of the Ottawa and are descending in growing numbers on the sea board of New Brunswick. At the present time the chances of the survival of their nationality and language are greater than ever. They have come to a point where their numbers are sufficient to maintain great newspapers, magazines, educational institutions and all the background of literature and intellectual intercourse that give a language from degenerating into a peasant's dialect. He who founds his polity of Canada in the theory of absorption of the French, builds upon the sand.

But the essential point is that we ought not to wish for such a sorption. We have a great asset in our double history, our dual tongues, and in our special relation to the two greatest national histories of the world. We must take our country as it is and build our future on it. We must harmonize the east and west but we cannot join them. In a sense and for our greatest good they will always be different. The energy of the west, the steadiness of the east, these must be blended in our national character. And so with our two races. We must build into the structure of our commonwealth all that is best in each. The chivalry and idealism of the French temperament, the steady reliability of the Scotch, the gravity of the Irish and the solid plumb-pudding common sense of the British, must all be found as ingredients in the make-up of the Canadian nationality.

ODD FISH.

Brought Up Through Repair of Government Cables.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Strange monsters the like of which have seldom been seen by man, were dragged up from a depth of 3,200 feet by the crew of the cable ship Burnside when they repaired the Alaska cable of Mount St. Elias last month. The Burnside is moored at its buoy in Elliott Bay, after two months of repairing and relaying the cables of the United States Army Signal Corps system. On board were scores of huge flasks filled with alcohol. In them floated strange shapes which it was hard to believe were living creatures. Balls of red hair, which looked like tumbled human hair, proved upon dissection to be a strange kind of deep water crab. Flesh colored round masses were found clinging to the cable by minute tentacles. One creature is shaped like the diablo toy, narrow in the middle with big concave white disks at either end by which it catches hold of any object. The sailors on board the Burnside have named it the spoon.

Another strange marine creature is shaped like an octopus, but has at least two dozen tentacles instead of eight. Many octopuses were found clinging to the cable, but they were thought too common to preserve. Whole sections of the cable pulled up for inspection were found covered several feet deep with strange plants and animal life. Seaweed, black instead of green, sponges and sea urchins predominated. Probably the strangest creature found on the cable was a flesh colored fish not more than four feet long, which was found enveloped in the tentacles of a young octopus. When brought to the surface its body was swollen like a balloon. Dr. J. E. Kelomey, the ship's surgeon, who examined it, said he believed the fish was choked by the hold of the octopus.

The section of cable upon which all this strange life was found had been down ten years at a depth of a mile and a half. The specimens which have been preserved and which are now on board the Burnside are to be handed over to the Smithsonian Institution for scientific study.

By Special Messenger.

Success Magazine. It is told that after Prof. Aytoun had made proposals of marriage to Miss Emily Jane Wilson, daughter of "Christopher North," he was, as a matter of course, referred to her father. As the professor was uncommonly diffident he said to her, "Emily, my dear, you must speak to him for me. I could not summon courage to speak to the professor on this subject." "Papa is in the library," said the lady. "Then you had better go to him," said the professor, "and I will wait here." There being apparently no help for it, the lady proceeded to the library. "Papa's answer is pinned to the back of my dress," said Miss Wilson, as she re-entered the room. Turning around the delighted suitor read these words: "With the author's compliments."

Strange Effect of Bird Seed.

Kansas City Star. A Gormet man, in his wife's absence, ate a lot of canary seed, mistaking it for breakfast food, and ever since he has been sleeping with his head under his arm.

What doth it profit a man to pray for the heathen if he isn't on speaking terms with his neighbor?



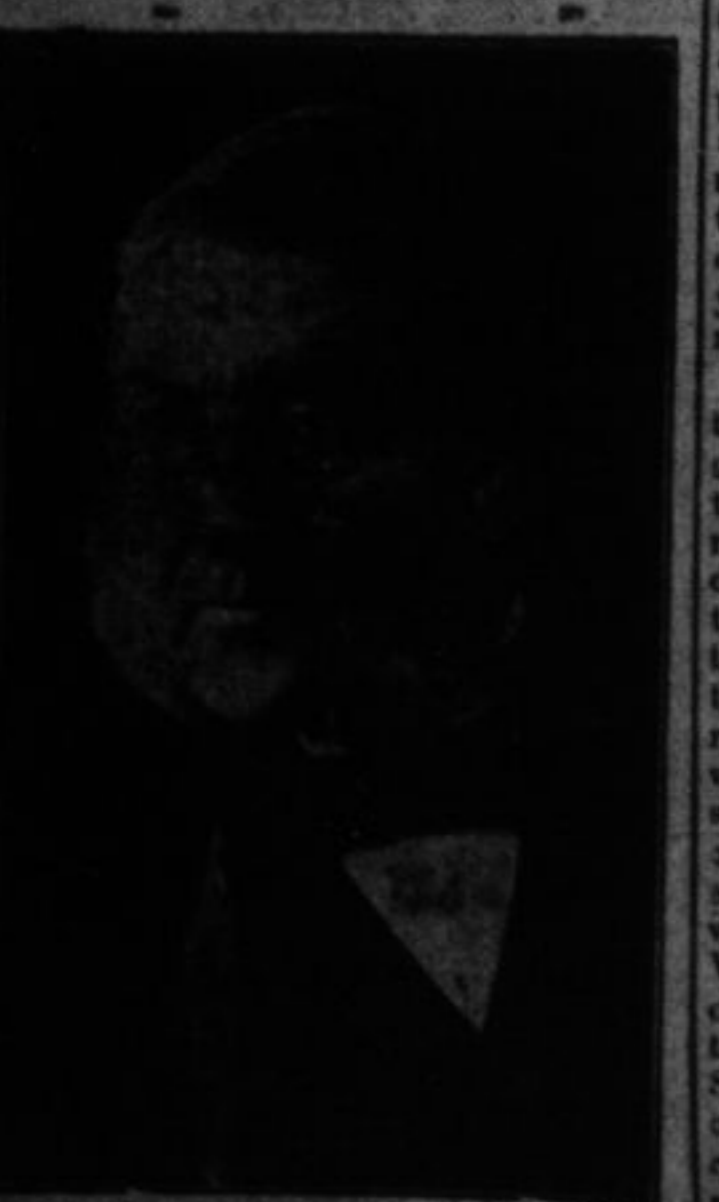
KING GEORGE V.

Under whom all British dominions are united in a common allegiance. as it as you will, compress one's modesty into the smallest space compatible with its continued existence, one must still realize that we have in Canada the basis of a future status, scarcely surpassed among the great communities of the world. Now of late years this great future has been moving towards at a rate of which a generation past, we never dreamed. In the old days we were busy with the pioneer struggle with the wilderness. We had all we could do to keep our scattered provinces together. It was enough for us to dream that the vast solitudes of the west would one day form an actual and inhabited part of Canada. All of that is changed now. Suddenly, as it seems, we stand upon the threshold of a new era as yet but little conscious of the path that we are to tread. Much of our future indeed still lies behind an impenetrable veil. In the political sense we do not seem to have reached any general consensus of opinion as to the very basis on which we mean to rest. There are some of us, and among them the writer of this article, whose fixed opinion is that the future destiny of Canada must for its own welfare lie within

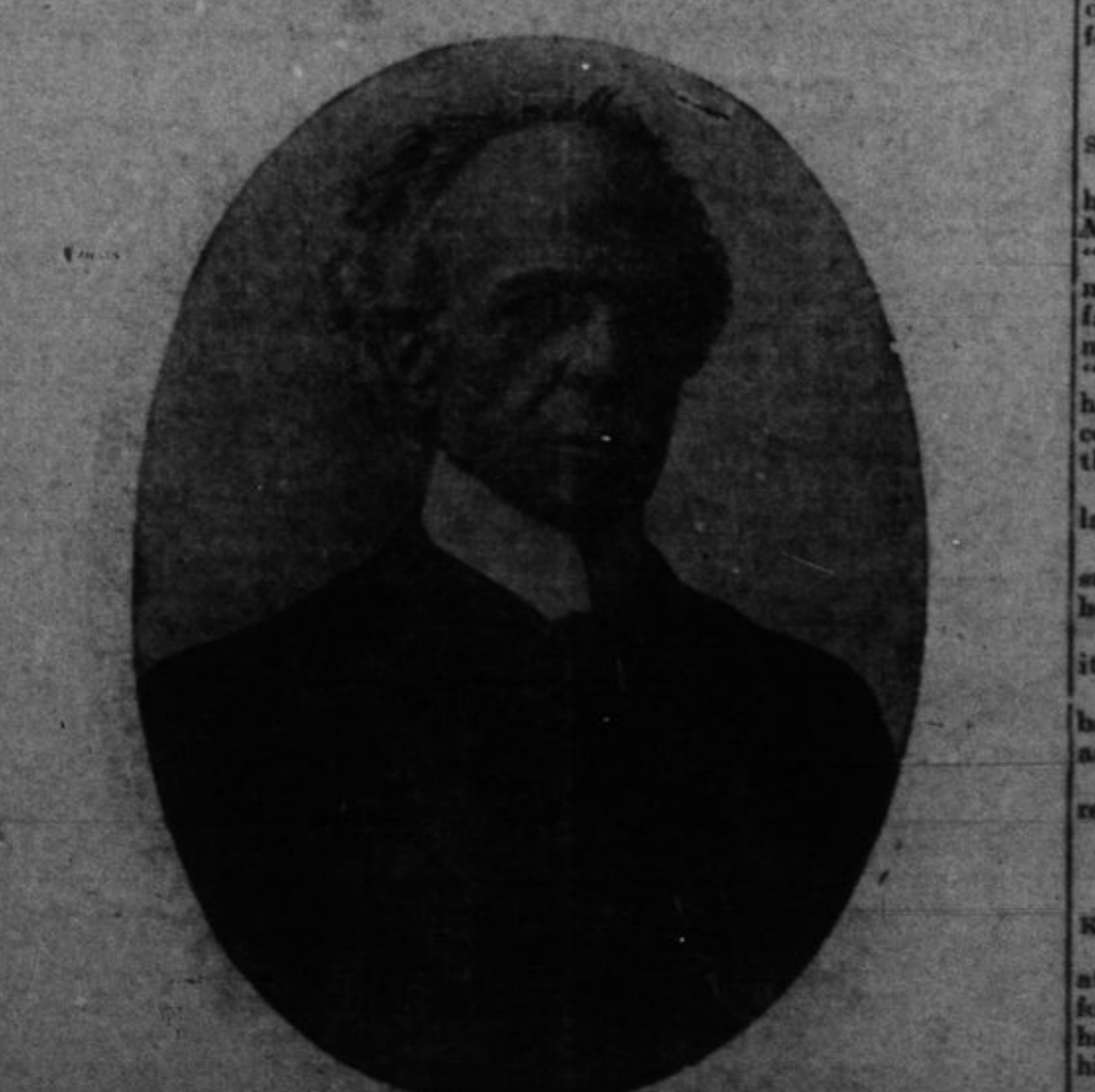
reaches a point which makes it appear a united and more or less self-sufficient unit. It is this point of maturity that we are reaching in Canada. Without enquiring into the political future, let us see upon what sort of environment our national future is to rest. Take first the increase of our population. The census office estimates of March of the present year gives us 7,250,000 people. Not long ago Lord Strathcona, speaking in London, said that Canada would have a population of 10,000,000 before the present century runs out. A statistical estimate will amply corroborate this. The rate of increase in the United States when it was of about our present numerical strength meant a doubling of the population every twenty-five years. At that rate, with 7,750,000 in 1911, we should have 15,500,000 in 1936, 31,000,000 in 1961, 62,000,000 in 1887 and approximately 100,000,000 at the close of the century.

But it is quite possible that our population in the first quarter of the century will increase faster than this. It is not generally understood that addition by immigration stands in a very different light for us from what it did to the United States. In the colonial period with a population of 3,000,000 the American colonies added only about 2,000 immigrant settlers per annum. For at least forty years after independence (1776-1816) the immigration was at the most only 3,000 to 4,000 a year. With a population of 7,000,000 the United States added yearly 3,000 from the outside. We add nearly 300,000.

Moreover, there is every indication that a still broader stream of the outgoing flood of the European migration will turn towards us. Europe has now every year nearly 3,000,000 wanderers to dispose of. At present half of them go to the United States. But that is changing. In the old days two things acted as magnets to draw the refugees of Europe to America: the first was the freedom of the republic, the second, far greater, the prospect of bread and work for all is found wherever free land awaits the settler. It was the broad acres of the Mississippi Valley, that brought over the millions of immigrants of the nineteenth century. But the free land of the United States is practically gone. The flood of immigration that now clogs the crowded slums of the American metropolises, will gradually turn itself towards the broad plains of Argentina and the great fertile valley of the Saskatchewan. Unless we find the



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