

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1938.

AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES A BIRTHDAY.

"Down Under" today (the orators always say "under the Southern Cross") Australia is celebrating her 150th birthday. Actually, Canada's time being 15 hours ahead, she was celebrating yesterday. In Sydney's renowned harbor (big enough to hold the entire British Navy at one time) battleships and ocean greyhounds and the old "tall ships" saluted the morning with flags and sirens, and aborigines raced in war canoes; while ashore hundreds of thousands gathered in Sydney's streets for the gaiety and the glory of the day.

It was on the 26th of January, 1788, that Captain PHILIP landed the first British settlers at Sydney Cove, began what is today the great Commonwealth of Australia. White men had been living and warring in Canada for about two centuries before that, though PHILIP's settlers were not the first white men to set foot upon Australia. The Portuguese were known to have sighted it (whether they landed is a matter of dispute) as early as 1601, while pirates, led by that WILLIAM DAMPIER, who, according to legend, took ALEXANDER SELKIRK (DEFOE'S "Robinson Crusoe") off the lonely Pacific Island, are believed to have landed upon its shores. Also, eighteen years before the arrival of PHILIP, Captain Cook, with his "Endeavour", discovered the continent's eastern shore. Indeed it was an ex-midshipman of the "Endeavour", JAMES MARIA MATRA, who in 1773 suggested to the British authorities that a settlement should be founded in New South Wales—the name given by Cook to the Australian continent.

But the real founding of Australia began when, in May, 1777, a fleet, under command of Captain PHILIP, and with supplies, equipment and settlers for a new colony, sailed from England. Proceeding by way of Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope, it reached Botany Bay on January 18th, 1788, and Sydney Cove eight days later. On that day a landing was effected, and the colony formally founded.

PHILIP's first fleet carried 1,000 souls, of whom a little over 700 were convicts. Yet not all of these convicts were criminals in the sense of the modern word. In those days men, women, and even children, were transported for petty misdemeanors; often they were hanged for them. Some of the Philip convicts were but political offenders; some of them were merely strikers (they didn't have collective bargaining in those days).

Yet the colony's early years were stormy. PHILIP was a wise, able administrator, but not all of his successors had his wisdom. Some of them were military martinetts, with little genius for government; hence there was trouble with the convicts, uprisings, deadlocks between rival bodies; sometimes the threat of famine. One of the men who made trouble was the famous Captain BLIGH, hero and victim of the famous Mutiny of the "Bounty".

Bringing peace and order after years was a great figure in Australia's history, Colonel LACHLAN MACQUARRIE. The fifth Governor of New South Wales, he combined military authority with tolerance and good sense, brought Australia a new era of peace and prosperity. It was MACQUARRIE, indeed, who laid the foundations for subsequent political growth, for the development of the system which flourishes today as the Australian Commonwealth.

It is a great and rich Commonwealth. Canadians seldom realize that Sydney is the third or fourth largest city in the British Empire, ranking among the world's dozen greatest cities. Its population is considerably greater than Montreal and Toronto. Its harbor is perhaps the finest in the world. It lacks Ottawa's stately Parliament Buildings, has no hostelry comparable to Ottawa's Chateau Laurier; but it has great business centres, rich residences, university buildings of noble architecture, fine schools, all the things of a great world city.

It is a great sporting city. Its golf courses are magnificent (some of the larger clubs, with mammoth club-houses, have as many as a thousand members); tennis (which is played mostly at night under powerful lights) is even more prominent than golf; and some dozen great race-tracks are just outside or very near the city. Australians, even more than Englishmen, are devoted to sports.

Smaller than Sydney, yet more modern and more stately, is Melbourne. There is great rivalry between the two cities, and it was this rivalry that was largely responsible for the selection of Canberra, of no particular former consequence, as the national Capital.

Australia's population today is about 7,000,000. These 7,000,000 people have a continent to themselves: a continent which has 112,000,000 sheep producing over 1,000,000,000 pounds of the finest wool in the world annually; which has 14,000,000 head of cattle; yields 140,000,000 bushels of wheat; produces 500,000,000 pounds of butter; gives up everything from gold and silver and copper and lead to pineapples and bananas and apples and oranges—and some glorious wines.

There are great industries, too—24,000 factories employing 500,000 persons, paying \$360,000,000 annually in wages, turning out nearly \$2,000,000,000 worth of goods.

Australia—we can say it without violence to modesty—is not as vast as Canada, not as rich. Many things that we possess it lacks. But it is a great part of the British Empire, with a brave past, an unchallenged future. On this day, therefore, Australia's birthday, Canadians salute their brothers "Down Under", wish them always success and prosperity.