

**CANADA FIRST: A  
MEMORIAL OF THE LATE  
WILLIAM A. FOSTER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649204106

Canada first: a memorial of the late William A. Foster by William A. Foster & Goldwin Smith

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**WILLIAM A. FOSTER & GOLDWIN SMITH**

**CANADA FIRST: A  
MEMORIAL OF THE LATE  
WILLIAM A. FOSTER**



# CANADA FIRST:

## A Memorial

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM A. FOSTER, Q.C.

With Introduction

BY

GOLDWIN SMITH, D.C.L.



Toronto :

HUNTER, ROSE & COMPANY.

1890.

F 1033  
F7A5

---

*Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety, by HUNTER, ROSE & COMPANY, at the Department of Agriculture.*

---

TO THE  
HUNTER, ROSE & CO.,  
BY  
HUNTER, ROSE & CO.,  
TORONTO.

## PREFATORY NOTE.



**S**HORTLY after the death of William A. Foster, the design was entertained of issuing, as a memorial of him, one or two of his literary productions for distribution among a few friends, together with some extracts from the obituary notices which had appeared in the Canadian Press. Mr. Foster's writings were on a variety of topics, though dealing chiefly with the national movement, known as "Canada First," of which, it may be said, he was himself a part. In 1875, when the movement, from various causes, began to wane, Mr. Foster devoted himself almost exclusively to his profession and wrote hardly anything for publication. Since then, some of those associated with him in the Canada First organization desired that its literature should be gathered and published; and, after his death, the expression of this desire was renewed, coupled with the wish to have some memorial of him whom they had known and loved, and who had been so largely identified with the patriotic movement. In response to these requests, the little volume which now appears has been published. In departing from the original design, of issuing a volume only for a limited circle of private readers, the apology must be the importunity of friends. But the issue of the volume may not be amiss if it tends to keep green the memory of one who was

not unworthy the regard and affection bestowed upon him, and if it serve to perpetuate the feeling which inspired "Canada First," namely, ardent patriotism and loyal devotion to the highest interests of the country.

The opportunity is here taken of recording a grateful sense of the kindness of many friends, who have shown an interest in the work and furthered its publication. Among those to whom the writer is specially indebted are Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Henry J. Morgan, and Mr. G. Mercer Adam.

To Mr. Goldwin Smith a special debt is due, for readily complying with the request to enrich the volume with an introduction. His characteristic kindness is greatly appreciated. An honoured friend of Mr. Foster, he has given to the publication a value which the reader will, doubtless, highly esteem.

To the Directors of the National Club, and to Mr. Wm. Cutts, of the Ontario Society of Artists, hearty thanks are tendered for permission to reproduce in this volume the very excellent portrait painted by Mr. Cutts for the Club.

M. B. F.

TORONTO, Oct., 1890.

---



## INTRODUCTION.

---

**T**HE long train of mourners which on the 3rd of November, 1888, attended the body of William Alexander Foster to the tomb, was following not only the funeral of a man of bright intellect, high professional promise, winning character, and many friends, but of one who had represented an idea and been the animating spirit of a movement. The idea, for the time at least, died with him: the movement, if it did not end its march, halted at his grave. It must be owned that even before his death the light of the idea had been growing pale and the pace of the movement had become slow.

The union of the North American Colonies by Confederation, the appeals of the authors of Confederation to the patriotism and self-reliance of the people, the glorious pictures which were then drawn of the greatness and resources of the country, could not fail to awaken strong emotions and kindle high hopes in the breasts of Canadians, especially in those of the young. It happened also that just then a generation of native Canadians, or men who had immigrated in childhood, were growing up to manhood and aspired to fill the high places of public life, of the professions, and of commerce, theretofore held

by men from the Old Country, who were at this time passing off the scene. The withdrawal of British troops had also helped to bring socially to the front young natives who had been thrown into the background by the social ascendancy of the British officer. W. A. Foster had graduated in law at Toronto University, had studied in the office of Mr. (now Sir Adam,) Wilson, and had written for the press, not only political and commercial, but comic, for he had a kindly vein of humour. He had a share, with Mr. Hugh Scott, in founding our great commercial paper, *The Monetary Times*. Mr. Charles Lindsey, than whom there could be no better judge, thought very highly of his promise as a journalist. One of his comrades in journalism, was Adam Clarke Tyner, his obituary article on whom is here reprinted. The fire of national aspiration and patriotism burned in Foster. In 1866 he sent two papers on Confederation to the *Westminster Review*. In the same year he paid a visit to England, where, thanks to the friendship of Mr. W. F. Rae, the writer, he conversed with Mr. Robert Lowe (now Lord Sherbrooke), George Eliot, and the poet Browning. In 1871 he produced the memorable pamphlet "Canada First," which leads the series of his productions in this volume. Some things in that pamphlet, when we now read it in cold blood, may seem to belong to the heyday of Confederation and of youth. But its effect at the time was great. It embodied a prevailing sentiment, gave shape to a floating idea, and called into existence the group of sympathizing spirits known by the collective

name of "Canada First." The aim of Canada First was never very clearly defined. Some of the group, borne on by the tide of the time, aspired more or less consciously, more or less openly, to an independent nationality. Others aspired to a nationality which they deemed possible without independence, and desired only to complete the measure of Canadian self-government, make the interest of Canada paramount in our policy, and fill all offices with men who, whether natives or not, were thoroughly Canadian in spirit. Some, perhaps, as the programme presently to be quoted indicates, had partly in view commercial legislation on the line since designated as the National Policy. To some probably Canada First was rather a vague sentiment than a distinct opinion or idea. All however united in striving to cultivate Canadian patriotism, to raise Canada above the rank of a mere dependency, and to give her the first place in Canadian hearts.

To attempt to give anything like a list of "Canada First" men might be unsafe. The nominations for the Council and Officers of the Association, which in time became its centre (January 6th, 1874), were Messrs. W. H. Howland, W. A. Foster, Wm. Canniff, M.D., Hugh Scott, R. W. Elliott, J. M. Trout, Jos. E. Macdougall, Wm. Badenach, W. G. McWilliams, C. E. English, James Michie, G. M. Rae, Nicol Kingsmill, Hugh Blain, Jos. A. Donovan, W. B. McMurrich, J. K. Macdonald, T. C. Scoble, Richard Grahame, Fred. Fenton, G. W. Badgerow, C. W. R. Biggar, W. H. Fraser, J. G. Ridout, James R. Roaf, Thomas