



FEBRUARY 2017

George Brown, SPEECH IN THE CONFEDERATION DEBATES

—February 8, 1865

This major speech represents the culmination of George Brown's 15-year campaign for constitutional reform and representation by population, and is in itself an important description of the historical grievances underlying the 1867 constitution. Bearing the marks of a man long-accustomed to Opposition, and to some extent still speaking from an Upper Canada point of view, Brown finally speaks from the government benches, describing Confederation as a great scheme of reform designed to clear away the constitutional problems that have been plaguing Canada since Brown's entry into politics. Later in his speech, Brown moves away from the troubled past, and sets out the chief advantages of Confederation, speaking in tones of ambition that show a thirst for national greatness. We see a sometime regional politician converted to genuine Canadian patriot—claiming that Canadians have solved peacefully conflicts that had plunged other countries into civil war. We also see the power of federalism to unite Canadians and release the sectional conflicts that had once been Brown's path to political power.

THIS GREAT SCHEME OF REFORM

HON. GEORGE BROWN rose and said:

It is with no ordinary gratification I rise to address the House on this occasion. I cannot help feeling that the struggle of half a lifetime for constitutional reform—the agitations in the country, and the fierce contests in this chamber—the strife, and the discord and the abuse of many years—are all compensated by the great scheme of reform which is now in your hands.

The Attorney-General for Upper Canada, as well as the Attorney-General for Lower Canada, in addressing the House last night, were anxious to have it understood that this scheme for uniting British America under one government is something different from “representation by population”—is something different from “joint authority”—but is in fact the very scheme of the government of which they were members in 1858.

Now, it is all very well that my honourable friends should receive credit for the large share they have contributed towards maturing the measure before the House; but I could not help reflecting while they spoke, that if this was their very scheme in 1858, they succeeded wonderfully in bottling it up from all the world except themselves, and I could not help regretting that we had to wait till 1864 until this mysterious plant of 1858 was forced to fruition.

For myself, I care not who gets the credit of this scheme—I believe it contains the best features of all the suggestions that have been made in the last ten years for the settlement of our troubles; and the whole feeling in my mind now is one of joy and thankfulness that there were found men of position and influence in Canada who, at a moment of serious crisis, had nerve and patriotism enough to cast aside political partisanship, to banish personal considerations, and unite for the accomplishment of a measure so fraught with advantage to their common country.

“*The whole feeling in my mind now is one of joy and thankfulness that there were found men of position and influence in Canada who, at a moment of serious crisis, had nerve and patriotism.*”

It was a bold step in the then existing state of public feeling for many members of the House to vote for the constitutional committee moved for by me last session—it was a very bold step for many of the members of that committee to speak and vote candidly upon it—it was a still bolder thing for many to place their names to the report that emanated from that committee—but it was an infinitely bolder step for the gentlemen who now occupy these treasury benches, to brave the misconceptions and suspicions that would certainly attach to the act, and enter the same government.

And it is not to be denied that such a coalition demanded no ordinary justification. But who does not feel that every one of us has to-day ample justification and reward for all we did in the document now under discussion? But seven short months have passed away since the coalition government was formed, yet already are we submitting a scheme well-weighed and matured, for the erection of a future empire—a scheme which has been received at home and abroad with almost universal approval.

HON. MR. HOLTON (ironically): Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BROWN: My honourable friend dissents from that, but is it possible truthfully to deny it? Has it not been approved and endorsed by the governments of five separate colonies? Has it not received the all but unanimous approval of the press of Canada? Has it not been heartily and unequivocally endorsed by the electors of Canada? My honourable friend opposite cries “No, no,” but I say “Yes, yes.”

Since the coalition was formed, and its policy of federal union announced, there have been no fewer than twenty-five parliamentary elections—fourteen for members of the Upper House, and eleven for members of the Lower House. At the fourteen Upper House contests, but three candidates dared to show themselves before the people in opposition to the government scheme; and of these, two were rejected, and one—only one—succeeded in finding a seat. At the eleven contests for the Lower House, but one candidate on either side of politics ventured to oppose the scheme, and I hope that even he will yet cast his vote in favour of confederation. Of these twenty-five electoral contests, fourteen were in Upper Canada, but not at one of them did a candidate appear in opposition to our scheme. And let it be observed how large a portion of the country these twenty-five electoral districts embraced. It is true that the eleven Lower House elections

only included that number of counties, but the fourteen Upper House elections embraced no fewer than forty counties. Of the 130 constituencies, therefore, into which Canada is divided for representation in this chamber, not fewer than fifty have been called on since our scheme was announced to pronounce at the polls their verdict upon it, and at the whole of them but four candidates on both sides of politics ventured to give it opposition.

Was I not right then in asserting that the electors of Canada had, in the most marked manner, pronounced in favour of the scheme? And will honourable gentlemen deny that the people and press of Great Britain have received it with acclamations of approval?—that the government of England has cordially endorsed and accepted it?—aye, that even the press and the public men of the United States have spoken of it with a degree of respect they never before accorded to any colonial movement?

I venture to assert that no scheme of equal magnitude, ever placed before the world, was received with higher eulogiums, with more universal approbation, than the measure we have now the pleasure of submitting for the acceptance of the Canadian parliament. And no higher eulogy could, I think, be pronounced than that I heard a few weeks ago from the lips of one of the foremost of British statesmen, that the system of government we proposed seemed to him a happy compound of the best features of the British and American constitutions.

And well might our present attitude in Canada arrest the earnest attention of other countries. Here is a people composed of two distinct races, speaking different languages, with religious and social and municipal and educational institutions totally different; with sectional hostilities of such a character as to render government for many years well nigh impossible; with a constitution so unjust in the view of one section as to justify any resort to enforce a remedy. And yet, here we sit, patiently and temperately discussing how these great evils and hostilities may justly and amicably be swept away forever.

“We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war.”

We are endeavouring to adjust harmoniously greater difficulties than have plunged other countries into all the horrors of civil war. We are striving to do peacefully and satisfactorily what Holland and Belgium, after years of strife, were unable to accomplish. We are seeking by calm discussion to settle questions that Austria and Hungary, that Denmark and Germany, that Russia and Poland, could only crush by the iron heel of armed force. We are seeking to do without foreign intervention that which deluged in blood the sunny plains of Italy.

We are striving to settle forever issues hardly less momentous than those that have rent the neighbouring republic and are now exposing it to all the horrors of civil war. Have we not then great cause of thankfulness that we have found a better way for the solution of our troubles than that which has entailed on other countries such deplorable results? And should not every one of us endeavour to rise to the magnitude of the occasion, and earnestly seek to deal with this question to the end in the same candid and conciliatory spirit in which, so far, it has been discussed?

The scene presented by this chamber at this moment, I venture to affirm, has few parallels in history. One hundred years have passed away since these provinces became by conquest part of the British Empire.

I speak in no boastful spirit—I desire not for a moment to excite a painful thought—what was then the fortune of war of the brave French nation, might have been ours on that well-fought field. I recall those olden times merely to mark the fact that here sit to-day the descendants of the victors and the vanquished in the fight of 1759, with all the differences of language, religion, civil law and social habit, nearly as distinctly marked as they were a century ago. Here we sit to-day seeking amicably to find a remedy for constitutional evils and injustice complained of—by the vanquished? No, but complained of by the conquerors!

“Here we sit to-day seeking amicably to find a remedy for constitutional evils and injustice complained of—by the vanquished? No, but complained of by the conquerors!”

Here sit the representatives of the British population claiming justice—only justice; and here sit the representatives of the French population, discussing in the French tongue whether we shall have it. One hundred years have passed away since the conquest of Quebec, but here sit the children of the victor and the vanquished, all avowing hearty attachment to the British Crown—all earnestly deliberating how we shall best extend the blessings of British institutions—how a great people may be established on this continent in close and hearty connection with Great Britain. Where, in the page of history, shall we find a parallel to this? Will it not stand as an imperishable monument to the generosity of British rule?

And it is not in Canada alone that this scene is being witnessed. Four other colonies are at this moment occupied as we are—declaring their hearty love for the parent state, and deliberating with us how they may best discharge the great duty entrusted to their hands, and give their aid in developing the teeming resources of these vast possessions. And well may the work we have unitedly proposed rouse the ambition and energy of every true man in British America.

Look at the map of the continent of America and mark that island (Newfoundland) commanding the mouth of the noble river that almost cuts our continent in twain. Well, that island is equal in extent to the kingdom of Portugal. Cross the straits to the mainland, and you touch the hospitable shores of Nova Scotia, a country quite as large as the kingdom of Greece. Then mark the sister province of New Brunswick—equal in extent to Denmark and Switzerland combined. Pass up the River St. Lawrence to Lower Canada—a country as large as France. Pass on to Upper Canada, twenty thousand square miles larger than Great Britain and Ireland put together. Cross over the continent to the shores of the Pacific, and you are in British Columbia, the land of golden promise—equal in extent to the Austrian empire. I speak not now of the vast Indian territories that lie between—greater in extent than the whole soil of Russia—and that will ere long, I trust, be opened up to civilization under the auspices of the British American confederation.

Well, the bold scheme in your hands is nothing less than to gather all these countries into one—to organize them all under one government, with the protection of the British flag, and in heartiest sympathy and affection with our fellow-subjects in the land that gave us birth. Our scheme is to establish a government that will seek to turn the tide of European emigration into this northern half of the American continent—that will strive to develop its great natural resources—and that will endeavour to maintain liberty, and justice, and Christianity through-out the land.

MR. T. C. WALLBRIDGE: When?

HON. MR. CARTIER: Very soon!

HON. MR. BROWN: The honourable member for North Hastings asks when all this can be done? The whole great ends of this confederation may not be realized in the lifetime of many who now hear me. We imagine not that such a structure can be built in a month or in a year.

What we propose now is but to lay the foundations of the structure—to set in motion the governmental machinery that will one day, we trust, extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific. And we take special credit to ourselves that the system we have devised, while admirably adapted to our present situation, is capable of gradual and efficient expansion in future years to meet all the great purposes contemplated by our scheme.

“*What we propose now is but to lay the foundations of the structure—to set in motion the governmental machinery that will one day, we trust, extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific.*”

But if the honourable gentleman will only recall to mind that when the United States seceded from the mother country, and for many years afterwards, their population was not nearly equal to ours at this moment—that their internal improvements did not then approach to what we have already attained, and that their trade and commerce was not then a third of what ours has already reached—I think that he will see that the fulfilment of our hopes may not be so very remote as at first sight might be imagined. And he will be strengthened in that conviction if he remembers that what we propose to do is to be done with the cordial sympathy and assistance of that great power of which it is our happiness to form a part.

Such are the objects of attainment to which the British American Conference pledged itself in October. And said I not rightly that such a scheme is well fitted to fire the ambition and rouse the energies of every member of this House? Does it not lift us above the petty politics of the past, and present to us high purposes and great interests that may well call forth all the intellectual ability and all the energy and enterprise to be found among us? I readily admit all the gravity of the question, and that it ought to be considered cautiously and thoroughly before adoption. Far be it from me to deprecate the closest criticism, or to doubt for a moment the sincerity or patriotism of those who feel it their duty to oppose the measure. But in considering a question on which hangs the future destiny of half a continent, ought not the spirit of mere fault-finding to be hushed?—ought not the voice of partisanship to be banished from our debates?—ought we not sit down and discuss the arguments presented in the earnest and candid spirit of men bound by the same interests, seeking a common end, and loving the same country?

Some honourable gentlemen seem to imagine that the members of government have a deeper interest in this scheme than others—but what possible interest can any of us have except that which we share with every citizen of the land? What risk does any one run from this measure in which all of us do not fully participate? What possible inducement could we have to urge this scheme, except our earnest and heartfelt conviction that it will inure to the solid and lasting advantage of our country?

There is one consideration that cannot be banished from this discussion, and that ought, I think, to be remembered in every word we utter; it is that the constitutional system of Canada cannot remain as it is now. Something must be done. We cannot stand still. We cannot go back to chronic, sectional hostility and discord—to a state of perpetual ministerial crises. The events of the last eight months cannot be obliterated; the solemn admissions of men of all parties can never be erased. The claims of Upper Canada for justice must be met, and met now. I say, then, that every one who raises his voice in hostility to this measure is

bound to keep before him, when he speaks, all the perilous consequences of its rejection; I say that no man who has a true regard for the well-being of Canada can give a vote against this scheme, unless he is prepared to offer, in amendment, some better remedy for the evils and injustice that have so long threatened the peace of our country. And not only must the scheme proposed in amendment be a better scheme—it must be something that can be carried.

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I see an honourable friend now before me, for whose opinions I have the very highest respect, who says to me: “Mr. Brown, you should not have settled this part of the plan as you have done; here is the way you should have framed it.” “Well, my dear sir,” is my reply, “I perfectly agree with you, but it could not be done. Whether we ask for parliamentary reform for Canada alone or in union with the Maritime Provinces, the views of French Canadians must be consulted as well as ours. This scheme can be carried, and no scheme can be that has not the support of both sections of the province.”

HON. MR. CARTIER: There is the question.

HON. MR. BROWN: Yes, that is the question and the whole question. No constitution ever framed was without defect; no act of human wisdom was ever free from imperfection; no amount of talent and wisdom and integrity combined in preparing such a scheme could have placed it beyond the reach of criticism.

And the framers of this scheme had immense special difficulties to overcome. We had the prejudices of race and language and religion to deal with; and we had to encounter all the rivalries of trade and commerce, and all the jealousies of diversified local interests. To assert, then, that our scheme is without fault, would be folly. It was necessarily the work of concession; not one of the thirty-three framers but had, on some points, to yield his opinions; and, for myself, I freely admit that I struggled earnestly, for days together, to have portions of the scheme amended.

But admitting all this—admitting all the difficulties that beset us—admitting frankly that defects in the measure exist—I say that, taking the scheme as a whole, it has my cordial, enthusiastic support, without hesitation or reservation. I believe it will accomplish all, and more than all, that we, who have so long fought the battle of parliamentary reform, ever hoped to see accomplished. I believe that, while granting security for local interests, it will give free scope for carrying out the will of the whole people in general matters—that it will draw closer the bonds that unite us to Great Britain—and that it will lay the foundations deep and strong of a powerful and prosperous people.

And if the House will allow me to trespass to a somewhat unusual degree on its indulgence, I am satisfied that I can clearly establish that such are the results fairly to be anticipated from the measure. There are two views in which this scheme may be regarded, namely, the existing evils it will remedy, and the new advantages it will secure for us as a people. Let us begin by examining its remedial provisions.

First, then, it applies a complete and satisfactory remedy to the injustice of the existing system of parliamentary representation. The people of Upper Canada have bitterly complained that though they numbered

four hundred thousand souls more than the population of Lower Canada, and though they have contributed three or four pounds to the general revenue for every pound contributed by the sister province, yet the Lower Canadians send to parliament as many representatives as they do. Now, the measure in your hands brings this injustice to an end; it sweeps away the line of demarcation between the two sections on all matters common to the whole province; it gives representation according to numbers wherever found in the House of Assembly; and it provides a simple and convenient system for readjusting the representation after each decennial census.

To this proposed constitution of the Lower Chamber, I have heard only two objections. It has been alleged that until after the census of 1871, the number of members is to remain as at present; but this is a mistake. Upper Canada is to receive from the start eighty-two representatives, and Lower Canada sixty-five; and what-ever increase the census of 1871 may establish will be then adjusted. It has also been objected that though the resolutions provide that the existing parliament of Canada shall establish the electoral divisions for the first organization of the federal parliament, they do not determine in whose hands the duty of distributing any additional members is to be vested. No doubt on this head need exist; the federal parliament will of course have full power to regulate all arrangements for the election of its own members.

But I am told by Upper Canadians—the constitution of the Lower House is all well enough, it is in the Upper House arrangements that the scheme is objectionable. And first, it is said that Upper Canada should have had in the legislative council a greater number of members than Lower Canada.

MR. T. C. WALLBRIDGE: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BROWN: The honourable member for North Hastings is of that opinion; but that gentleman is in favour of a legislative union, and had we been forming a legislative union, there might have been some force in the demand.

“*The very essence of our compact is that the union shall be federal and not legislative.*”

But the very essence of our compact is that the union shall be federal and not legislative. Our Lower Canada friends have agreed to give us representation by population in the Lower House, on the express condition that they shall have equality in the Upper House. On no other condition could we have advanced a step; and for my part, I am quite willing that they should have it. In maintaining the existing sectional boundaries and handing over the control of local matters to local bodies, we recognize, to a certain extent, a diversity of interests; and it was quite natural that the protection for those interests, by equality in the Upper Chamber, should be demanded by the less numerous provinces.

Honourable gentlemen may say that it will erect a barrier in the Upper House against the just influence that Upper Canada will exercise, by her numbers, in the Lower House, over the general legislation of the country. That may be true to a certain extent, but honourable gentlemen will bear in mind that that barrier, be it more or less, will not affect money bills. Hitherto we have been paying a vast proportion of the taxes, with little or no control over the expenditure. But, under this plan, by our just influence in the Lower Chamber, we shall hold the purse strings. If, from this concession of equality in the Upper Chamber, we are restrained from forcing through measures which our friends of Lower Canada may consider injurious to their interests, we shall, at any rate, have power, which we never had before, to prevent them from forcing

through whatever we may deem unjust to us. I think the compromise a fair one, and am persuaded that it will work easily and satisfactorily.

But it has been said that the members of the Upper House ought not to be appointed by the Crown, but should continue to be elected by the people at large. On that question my views have been often expressed. I have always been opposed to a second elective chamber, and I am so still, from the conviction that two elective houses are inconsistent with the right working of the British parliamentary system. I voted, almost alone, against the change when the council was made elective, but I have lived to see a vast majority of those who did the deed wish it had not been done.

It is quite true, and I am glad to acknowledge it, that many evils anticipated from the change when the measure was adopted have not been realized. I readily admit that men of the highest character and position have been brought into the council by the elective system, but it is equally true that the system of appointment brought into it men of the highest character and position. Whether appointed by the Crown or elected by the people, since the introduction of parliamentary government, the men who have composed the Upper House of this legislature have been men who would have done honour to any legislature in the world.

But what we most feared was, that the legislative councillors would be elected under party responsibility; that a partisan spirit would soon show itself in the chamber; and that the right would soon be asserted to an equal control with this House over money bills. That fear has not been realized to any dangerous extent. But is it not possible that such a claim might ere long be asserted? Do we not hear, even now, mutterings of a coming demand for it? Nor can we forget that the elected members came into that chamber gradually; that the large number of old appointed members exercised much influence in maintaining the old forms of the House, the old style of debate, and the old barriers against encroachment on the privileges of the Commons. But the appointed members of the council are gradually passing away, and when the elective element becomes supreme, who will venture to affirm that the council would not claim that power over money bills which this House claims as of right belonging to itself? Could they not justly say that they represent the people as well as we do, and that the control of the purse strings ought, therefore, to belong to them as much as to us?

It is said they have not the power. But what is to prevent them from enforcing it? Suppose we had a conservative majority here, and a reform majority above—or a conservative majority above and a reform majority here—all elected under party obligations—what is to prevent a dead-lock between the chambers? It may be called unconstitutional—but what is to prevent the councillors (especially if they feel that in the dispute of the hour they have the country at their back) from practically exercising all the powers that be-long to us? They might amend our money bills, they might throw out all our bills if they liked, and bring to a stop the whole machinery of government. And what could we do to prevent them?

But, even supposing this were not the case, and that the elective Upper House continued to be guided by that discretion which has heretofore actuated its proceedings, still, I think, we must all feel that the election of members for such enormous districts as form the constituencies of the Upper House has become a great practical inconvenience. I say this from personal experience, having long taken an active interest in the electoral contests in Upper Canada. We have found greater difficulty in inducing candidates to offer for seats in the Upper House, than in getting ten times the number for the Lower House. The constituencies are so vast, that it is difficult to find gentle-men who have the will to incur the labour of such a contest, who are sufficiently known and popular enough throughout districts so wide, and who have money enough to pay the enormous bills, not incurred in any corrupt way—do not fancy that I mean that for a moment—but the bills that are sent in after the contest is over, and which the candidates are compelled to pay if they ever hope to present themselves for re-election.

But honourable gentlemen say, “This may be all very well, but you are taking an important power out of the hands of the people, which they now possess.” Now, this is a mistake. We do not propose to do anything

of the sort. What we propose is, that the Upper House shall be appointed from the best men of the country by those holding the confidence of the representatives of the people in this chamber. It is proposed that the government of the day, which only lives by the approval of this chamber, shall make the appointments, and be responsible to the people for the selections they shall make. Not a single appointment could be made, with regard to which the government would not be open to censure, and which the representatives of the people, in this House, would not have an opportunity of condemning.

For myself, I have maintained the appointment principle, as in opposition to the elective, ever since I came into public life, and have never hesitated, when before the people, to state my opinions in the broadest manner; and yet not in a single instance have I ever found a constituency in Upper Canada, or a public meeting, declaring its disapproval of appointment by the Crown and its desire for election by the people at large. When the change was made in 1855 there was not a single petition from the people asking for it—it was in a manner forced on the legislature. The real reason for the change was that before responsible government was introduced into this country, while the old oligarchical system existed, the Upper House continuously and systematically was at war with the popular branch, and threw out every measure of a liberal tendency. The result was that in the famous ninety-two resolutions the introduction of the elective principle into the Upper House was declared to be indispensable. So long as Mr. Robert Baldwin remained in public life, the thing could not be done; but when he left the deed was consummated.

“ I have never hesitated, when before the people, to state my opinions in the broadest manner.”

But it is said that if the members are to be appointed for life, the number should be unlimited—that, in the event of a dead-lock arising between that chamber and this, there should be power to overcome the difficulty by the appointment of more members. Well, under the British system, in the case of a legislative union, that might be a legitimate provision. But honourable gentlemen must see that the limitation of the numbers in the Upper House lies at the base of the whole compact on which this scheme rests. It is perfectly clear, as was contended by those who represented Lower Canada in the conference, that if the number of legislative councillors was made capable of increase, you would thereby sweep away the whole protection they had from the Upper Chamber.

But it has been said that, though you may not give the power to the executive to increase the numbers of the Upper House in the event of a dead-lock, you might limit the term for which the members are appointed. I was myself in favour of that proposition. I thought it would be well to provide for a more frequent change in the composition of the Upper House, and lessen the danger of the chamber being largely composed of gentlemen whose advanced years might forbid the punctual and vigorous discharge of their public duties. Still, the objection made to this was very strong. It was said: “Suppose you appoint them for nine years, what will be the effect? For the last three or four years of their term they would be anticipating its expiry, and anxiously looking to the administration of the day for reappointment; and the consequence would be that a third of the members would be under the influence of the executive.” The desire was to render the Upper House a thoroughly independent body—one that would be in the best position to canvass dispassionately the measures of this House, and stand up for the public interests in opposition to hasty or partisan legislation.

It was contended that there is no fear of a dead-lock. We were reminded how the system of appointing

for life had worked in past years, since responsible government was introduced; we were told that the complaint was not then that the Upper Chamber had been too obstructive a body—not that it had sought to restrain the popular will, but that it had too faithfully reflected the popular will. Undoubtedly that was the complaint formerly pressed upon us, and I readily admit that if ever there was a body to whom we could safely entrust the power which by this measure we propose to confer on the members of the Upper Chamber, it is the body of gentlemen who at this moment compose the legislative council of Canada.

The forty-eight councillors for Canada are to be chosen from the present chamber. There are now thirty-four members from the one section, and thirty-five from the other. I believe that of the sixty-nine, some will not desire to make their appearance here again; others, unhappily, from years and infirmity, may not have strength to do so; and there may be others who will not desire to qualify under the statute. It is quite clear that when twenty-four are selected for Upper Canada and twenty-four for Lower Canada, very few indeed of the present House will be excluded from the federal chamber; and I confess I am not without hope that there may be some way yet found of providing, for all who desire it, an honourable position in the legislature of the country.

And after all, is it not an imaginary fear—that of a deadlock? Is it at all probable that any body of gentlemen who may compose the Upper House, appointed as they will be for life, acting as they will do on personal and not party responsibility, possessing as they must a deep stake in the welfare of the country, and desirous as they must be of holding the esteem of their fellow-subjects, would take so unreasonable a course as to imperil the whole political fabric? The British House of Peers itself does not venture, *à bout-rance*, to resist the popular will, and can it be anticipated that our Upper Chamber would set itself rashly against the popular will? If any fear is to be entertained in the matter, is it not rather that the councillors will be found too thoroughly in harmony with the popular feeling of the day? And we have this satisfaction at any rate, that so far as its first formation is concerned, so far as the present question is concerned, we shall have a body of gentlemen in whom every confidence may be placed.

But it is objected that in the constitution of the Upper House, so far as Lower Canada is concerned, the existing electoral divisions are to be maintained, while, as regards Upper Canada, they are to be abolished—that the members from Lower Canada are to sit as representing the divisions in which they reside or have their property qualification; while in Upper Canada there is no such arrangement. Undoubtedly this is the fact; it has been so arranged to suit the peculiar position of this section of the province. Our Lower Canada friends felt that they had French Canadian interests and British interests to be protected, and they conceived that the existing system of electoral divisions would give protection to these separate interests. We in Upper Canada, on the other hand, were quite content that they should settle that among themselves, and maintain their existing divisions if they chose. But, so far as we in the west were concerned, we had no such separate interests to protect—we had no diversities of origin or language to reconcile—and we felt that the true interest of Upper Canada was that her very best men should be sent to the legislative council, wherever they might happen to reside or wherever their property was located.

If there is one evil in the American system which in my mind stands out as pre-eminently its greatest defect, except universal suffrage, it is that under that constitution the representatives of the people must reside in the constituencies for which they sit. The result is that a public man, no matter what his talent or what his position, no matter how necessary it may be for the interest of the country that he should be in public life, unless he happens to belong to the political party popular for the time being in the constituency where he resides, cannot possibly find a seat in congress. And over and over again have we seen the very best men of the republic, the most illustrious names recorded in its political annals, driven out of the legislature of their country, simply because the majority in the electoral division in which they lived was of a different political party from them. I do think the British system infinitely better than that, securing as it does that public men may be trained to public life, with the assured conviction that if they prove themselves worthy of public confidence, and gain a position in the country, constituencies will always be found

to avail themselves of their services, whatever be the political party to which they may adhere. You may make politicians by the other, but assuredly this is the way that statesmen are produced.

But it is further objected that the property qualification of the members of the Upper House from Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland may be either real or personal estate, while in the others it is to be real estate alone. This is correct; but I fancy it matters little to us upon what species of property our friends in Prince Edward Island or in Newfoundland base their qualification. In Canada real estate is abundant; every one can obtain it; and it is admitted by all to be the best qualification, if it be advisable to have any property qualification at all. But in Newfoundland it would be exceedingly inconvenient to enforce such a rule. The public lands there are not even surveyed to any considerable extent; the people are almost entirely engaged in fishing and commercial pursuits, and to require a real estate qualification would be practically to exclude some of its best public men from the legislative council. Then in Prince Edward Island a large portion of the island is held in extensive tracts by absentee proprietors and leased to the settlers. A feud of long standing has been the result, and there would be some difficulty in finding landed proprietors who would be acceptable to the people as members of the Upper House.

This also must be remembered, that it will be a very different thing for a member from Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island to attend the legislature at Ottawa from what it is for one of ourselves to go there. He must give up not only his time, but the comfort and convenience of being near home; and it is desirable to throw no unnecessary obstacle in the way of our vetting the very best men from these provinces.

But it is further objected that these resolutions do not define how the legislative councillors are to be chosen at first. I apprehend, however, there is no doubt whatever as regards that. Clause 14 says: "The first selection of the members to constitute the federal legislative council shall be made from the members of the now existing legislative councils, by the Crown, at the recommendation of the general executive government, upon the nomination of the respective local governments." The clear meaning of this clause simply is, that the present governments of the several provinces are to choose out of the existing bodies—so far as they can find gentlemen willing and qualified to serve—the members who shall at starting compose the federal legislative council; that they are to present the names so selected to the executive council of British America when constituted—and on the advice of that body the councillors will be appointed by the Crown. And such has been the spirit shown from first to last in carrying out the compact of July last by all the parties to it, that I for one have no apprehension whatever that full justice will not be done to the party which may be a minority in the government, but it is certainly not in a minority either in the country or in this House. I speak not only of Upper Canada but of Lower Canada as well.

HON. MR. DORION: Ha! ha!

HON. MR. BROWN: My honourable friend laughs, but I assure him, and he will not say I do so for the purpose of deceiving him, that having been present in conference and in council, having heard all the discussions and well ascertained the feelings of all associated with me, I have not a shadow of a doubt on my mind that full justice will be done in the selection of the first federal councillors, not only to those who may have been in the habit of acting with me, but also to those who have acted with my honourable friend, the member for Hochelaga.

Now, I believe I have answered every objection that has come from any quarter against the proposed constitution of the federal legislature. I am persuaded there is not one well-founded objection that can be urged against it. It is just to all parties; it remedies the gross injustice of the existing system; and I am convinced it will not only work easily and safely, but be entirely satisfactory to the great mass of our people. But I go further; I say that were all the objections urged against this scheme sound and cogent, they sink into utter insignificance in view of all the miseries this scheme will relieve us from—in view of all the difficulties that must surround any measure of parliamentary reform for Canada that could possibly be devised.

Will honourable gentlemen who spend their energies in hunting out blemishes in this scheme remember for a moment the utter injustice of the one we have at present? Public opinion has made rapid strides in the last six months on the representation question,—but think what it was a week before the present coalition was formed! Remember how short a time has elapsed since the member for Peel (Hon. Mr. J. Hilliard Cameron) proposed to grant one additional member to Upper Canada, and could not carry even that. Remember that but a few weeks ago the hon. member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. Dorion), who now leads the crusade against this measure, publicly declared that five or six additional members was all Upper Canada was entitled to, and that with these the Upper Canadians would be content for many years to come. And when he has reflected on all this, let the man who is disposed to carp at this great measure of representative reform justify his conduct if he can, to the thousands of disfranchised freeholders of Upper Canada demanding justice at our hands.

“*The complete justice which this measure secures to the people of Upper Canada in the vital matter of parliamentary representation alone, renders all the blemishes averred against it utterly contemptible in the balance.*”

For myself, I unhesitatingly say, that the complete justice which this measure secures to the people of Upper Canada in the vital matter of parliamentary representation alone, renders all the blemishes averred against it utterly contemptible in the balance.

But the second feature of this scheme as a remedial measure is that it removes to a large extent the injustice of which Upper Canada has complained in financial matters. We in Upper Canada have complained that though we paid into the public treasury more than three-fourths of the whole revenue, we had less control over the system of taxation and the expenditure of the public moneys than the people of Lower Canada. Well, the scheme in the Speaker's hand remedies that. The absurd line of separation between the provinces is swept away for general matters; we are to have seventeen additional members in the House that holds the purse; and the taxpayers of the country, wherever they reside, will have their just share of influence over revenue and expenditure.

We have also complained that immense sums of public money have been systematically taken from the public chest for local purposes of Lower Canada, in which the people of Upper Canada had no interest whatever, though compelled to contribute three-fourths of the cash. Well, this scheme remedies that. All local matters are to be banished from the general legislature; local governments are to have control over local affairs, and if our friends in Lower Canada choose to be extravagant they will have to bear the burden of it themselves. No longer shall we have to complain that one section pays the cash while the other spends it; hereafter, they who pay will spend, and they who spend more than they ought will have to bear the brunt. It was a great thing to accomplish this, if we had accomplished nothing more, for if we look back on our doings of the last fifteen years I think it will be acknowledged that the greatest jobs perpetrated were of a local character, that our fiercest contests were about local matters that stirred up sectional jealousies and indignation to its deepest depth.

We have further complained that if a sum was properly demanded for some legitimate local purpose in one section, an equivalent sum had to be appropriated to the other as an offset, thereby entailing prodigal expenditure, and unnecessarily increasing the public debt. Well, this scheme puts an end to that.

Each province is to determine for itself its own wants, and to find the money to meet them from its own resources.

But I am told that though true it is that local matters are to be separated and the burden of local expenditure placed upon local shoulders, we have made an exception from that principle in providing that a subsidy of eighty cents per head shall be taken from the federal chest and granted to the local governments for local purposes. Undoubtedly this is the fact, and I do not hesitate to admit that it would have been better if this had been otherwise. I trust I commit no breach of discretion in stating that in conference I was one of the strongest advocates for defraying the whole of the local expenditures of the local governments by means of direct taxation, and that there were liberal men in all sections of the provinces who would gladly have had it so arranged.

But there was one difficulty in the way—a difficulty which has often before been encountered in this world—and that difficulty was simply this, it could not be done. We could neither have carried it in conference nor yet in any one of the existing provincial legislatures. Our friends in Lower Canada, I am afraid, have a constitutional disinclination to direct taxation, and it was obvious that if the confederation scheme had had attached to it a provision for the imposition of such a system of taxation, my honourable friends opposite would have had a much better chance of success in blowing the bellows of agitation than they now have. The objection, moreover, was not confined to Lower Canada—all the lower provinces stood in exactly the same position. They have not a municipal system such as we have, discharging many of the functions of government; but their general government performs all the duties which in Upper Canada devolve upon our municipal councils, as well as upon parliament. If, then, the lower provinces had been asked to maintain their customs duties for federal purposes, and to impose on themselves by the same Act direct taxation for all their local purposes, the chances of carrying the scheme of union would have been greatly lessened.

But I apprehend that if we did not succeed in putting this matter on the footing that would have been the best, at least we did the next best thing. Two courses were open to us—either to surrender to the local governments some source of indirect revenue, some tax which the general government proposed to retain, or collect the money by the federal machinery, and distribute it, to the local governments for local purposes. And we decided in favour of the latter. We asked the representatives of the different governments to estimate how much they would require after the inauguration of the federal system to carry on their local machinery. As at first presented to us, the annual sum required for all the provinces was something like five millions of dollars—an amount that could not possibly have been allotted. The great trouble was that some of the governments are vastly more expensive than others—extensive countries, with sparse populations, necessarily requiring more money per head for local government than countries more densely populated. But as any grant given from the common chest, for local purposes, to one province, must be extended to all, on the basis of population, it follows that for every \$1,000 given, for example, to New Brunswick, we must give over \$1,300 to Nova Scotia, \$4,000 to Lower Canada, and \$6,000 to Upper Canada, thereby drawing from the federal exchequer much larger sums than these provinces needed for local purposes.

The course we adopted then was this : We formed a committee of finance ministers, and made each of them go over his list of expenditures, lopping off all unnecessary services and cutting down every item to the lowest possible figure. By this means we succeeded in reducing the total annual subsidy required for local government to the sum of \$2,630,000—of which Lower Canada will receive annually \$880,000, and Upper Canada \$1,120,000. But it is said that in addition to her eighty cents per head under this arrangement, New Brunswick is to receive an extra grant from the federal chest of \$63,000 annually for ten years. Well, this is perfectly true.

After cutting down as I have explained the local expenditures to the lowest mark, it was found that New Brunswick and Newfoundland could not possibly carry on their local governments with the sum per head that would suffice for all the rest. New Brunswick imperatively required \$63,000 per annum beyond her

share, and we had either to find that sum for her or give up the hope of union. The question then arose, would it not be better to give New Brunswick a special grant of \$63,000 for a limited number of years, so that her local revenues might have time to be developed, rather than increase the subsidy to all the local governments, thereby placing an additional burden on the federal exchequer of over eight hundred thousand dollars per annum?

We came unanimously to the conclusion that the extra sum needed by New Brunswick was too small to be allowed to stand in the way of union—we also determined that it would be the height of absurdity to impose a permanent burden on the country of \$800,000 a year, simply to escape a payment of \$63,000 for ten years—and so it came about that New Brunswick got this extra grant—an arrangement which received, and receives now, my hearty approval. It is only right to say, however, that New Brunswick may possibly be in a position to do without this money.

The House is aware that the federal government is to assume the debts of the several provinces, each province being entitled to throw upon it a debt of \$25 per head of its population. Should the debt of any province exceed \$25 per head, it is to pay interest on the excess to the federal treasury; but should it fall below \$25 per head, it is to receive interest from the federal treasury on the difference between its actual debt and the debt to which it is entitled. Now, it so happens that the existing debt of New Brunswick is much less than it is entitled to throw on the federal government. It is, however, under liability for certain works, which if proceeded with would bring its debt up to the mark of \$25 a head. But if these works are not proceeded with, New Brunswick will be entitled to a large amount of annual interest from the federal chest, and that money is to be applied to the reduction of the \$63,000 extra grant. And this, moreover, is not to be forgotten as regards New Brunswick, that she brings into the union extensive railways now in profitable operation, the revenues from which are to go into the federal chest. A similar arrangement was found necessary as regards the island of Newfoundland—it, too, being a vast country with a sparse population. It was found absolutely essential that an additional grant beyond eighty cents per head should be made to enable her local government to be properly carried on. But, in consideration of this extra allowance, Newfoundland is to cede to the federal government her crown lands and minerals—and assuredly, if the reports of geologists are well founded, this arrangement will be as advantageous to us as it will be to the inhabitants of Newfoundland.

“*But how different will it be under federation! Nine hundred thousand people will come into the union, who will contribute to the revenue.*”

I am persuaded, then, that the House will feel with me that we in Canada have very little to complain of in regard to the subsidies for local government. But if a doubt yet remains on the mind of any honourable member, let him examine the trade returns of the several provinces, and he will see that, from the large quantity of dutiable goods consumed in the Maritime Provinces, they have received no undue advantage under the arrangement. Let this too ever be kept in mind, that the \$2,630,000 to be distributed to the local governments from the federal chest is to be in full and final extinguishment of all claims hereafter for local purposes; and that if this from any cause does not suffice, the local governments must supply all deficiencies from a direct tax on their own localities. And let honourable members from Upper Canada who carp at this annual subsidy, remember for a moment what we pay now, and they will cease their grumbling. Of all the money raised by the general government for local purposes in Canada, the tax-payers of Upper Canada now pay more than three-fourths; but far from getting back in proportion to

what they contribute, or even in proportion to their population, they do not get one-half of the money spent for local purposes.

But how different will it be under federation! Nine hundred thousand people will come into the union, who will contribute to the revenue quite as much, man for man, as the Upper Canadians, and in the distribution of the local subsidy we will receive our share on the basis of population—a very different arrangement from that we now endure. I confess that one of the strongest arguments in my mind for confederation is the economical ideas of the people of these Maritime Provinces, and the conviction that the influence of their public men in our legislative halls will be most salutary in all financial matters. A more economical people it would be difficult to find; their prime ministers and their chief justices get but £600 a year, Halifax currency, and the rest of their civil list is in much the same proportion.

But there is another great evil in our existing system that this scheme remedies; it secures to the people of each province full control over the administration of their own internal affairs. We in Upper Canada have complained that the minority of our representatives, the party defeated at the polls of Upper Canada, have been, year after year, kept in office by Lower Canada votes, and that all the local patronage of our section has been dispensed by those who did not possess the confidence of the people. Well, this scheme remedies that. The local patronage will be under local control, and the wishes of the majority in each section will be carried out in all local matters.

We have complained that the land system was not according to the views of our western people; that free lands for actual settlers was the right policy for us; that the price of a piece of land squeezed out of an immigrant was no consideration in comparison with the settlement among us of a hardy and industrious family; and that the colonization road system was far from satisfactory. Well, this scheme remedies that. Each province is to have control of its own crown lands, crown timber and crown minerals, and will be free to take such steps for developing them as each deems best. We have complained that local works of various kinds—roads, bridges and landing piers, court houses, gaols and other structures—have been erected in an inequitable and improvident manner. Well, this scheme remedies that; all local works are to be constructed by the localities and defrayed from local funds. And so on through the whole extensive details of internal local administration will this reform extend. The people of Upper Canada will have the entire control of their local matters, and will no longer have to betake themselves to Quebec for leave to open a road, to select a county town, or appoint a coroner.

But I am told that to this general principle of placing all local matters under local control, an exception has been made in regard to the common schools. The clause complained of is as follows: “6. Education; saving the rights and privileges which the protestant or catholic minority in both Canadas may possess as to their denominational schools at the time when the union goes into operation.”

“ I have never been able to see why all the people of the province, to whatever sect they may belong, should not send their children to the same common schools to receive the ordinary branches of instruction.”

Now, I need hardly remind the House that I have always opposed and continue to oppose the system of sectarian education, so far as the public chest is concerned. I have never had any hesitation on that point. I have never been able to see why all the people of the province, to whatever sect they may belong, should not

send their children to the same common schools to receive the ordinary branches of instruction. I regard the parent and the pastor as the best religious instructors—and so long as the religious faith of the children is uninterfered with, and ample opportunity afforded to the clergy to give religious instruction to the children of their flocks, I cannot conceive any sound objection to mixed schools.

But while in the conference and elsewhere I have always maintained this view, and always given my vote against sectarian public schools, I am bound to admit, as I have always admitted, that the sectarian system, carried to the limited extent it has yet been in Upper Canada, and confined as it chiefly is to cities and towns, has not been a very great practical injury. The real cause of alarm was that the admission of the sectarian principle was there, and that at any moment it might be extended to such a degree as to split up our school system altogether. There are but a hundred separate schools in Upper Canada, out of some four thousand, and all Roman Catholic. But if the Roman Catholics are entitled to separate schools and to go on extending their operations, so are the members of the Church of England, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and all other sects. No candid Roman Catholic will deny this for a moment; and there lay the great danger to our educational fabric, that the separate system might gradually extend itself until the whole country was studded with nurseries of sectarianism, most hurtful to the best interests of the province, and entailing an enormous expense to sustain the hosts of teachers that so prodigal a system of public instruction must inevitably entail.

Now, it is known to every honourable member of this House that an Act was passed in 1863, as a final settlement of this sectarian controversy. I was not in Quebec at the time, but if I had been here I would have voted against that bill, because it extended the facilities for establishing separate schools. It had, however, this good feature, that it was accepted by the Roman Catholic authorities, and carried through parliament as a final compromise of the question in Upper Canada. When, therefore, it was proposed that a provision should be inserted in the confederation scheme to bind that compact of 1863 and declare it a final settlement, so that we should not be compelled, as we have been since 1849, to stand constantly to our arms, awaiting fresh attacks upon our common school system, the proposition seemed to me one that was not rashly to be rejected.

I admit that, from my point of view, this is a blot on the scheme before the House; it is, confessedly, one of the concessions from our side that had to be made to secure this great measure of reform. But assuredly, I for one have not the slightest hesitation in accepting it as a necessary condition of the scheme of union, and doubly acceptable must it be in the eyes of honourable gentlemen opposite, who were the authors of the bill of 1863. But it was urged that though this arrangement might perhaps be fair as regards Upper Canada, it was not so as regards Lower Canada, for there were matters of which the British population have long complained, and some amendments to the existing School Act were required to secure them equal justice.

Well, when this point was raised, gentlemen of all parties in Lower Canada at once expressed themselves prepared to treat it in a frank and conciliatory manner, with a view to removing any injustice that might be shown to exist; and on this understanding the educational clause was adopted by the conference.

MR. T. C. WALLBRIDGE: That destroys the power of the local legislatures to legislate upon the subject.

HON. MR. BROWN: I would like to know how much “power” the honourable gentleman has now to legislate upon it? Let him introduce a bill to-day to annul the compact of 1863 and repeal all the sectarian School Acts of Upper Canada, and how many votes would he get for it? Would twenty members vote for it out of the one hundred and thirty who compose this House? If the honourable gentleman had been struggling for fifteen years, as I have been, to save the school system of Upper Canada from further extension of the sectarian element, he would have found precious little diminution of power over it in this very moderate compromise. And what says the honourable gentleman to leaving the British population of Lower Canada in the unrestricted power of the local legislature? The common schools of Lower Canada are not as in Upper Canada—they are almost entirely non-sectarian Roman Catholic schools. Does the honourable gentleman,

then, desire to compel the Protestants of Lower Canada to avail themselves of Roman Catholic institutions, or leave their children without instruction?

I am further in favour of this scheme because it will bring to an end the sectional discord between Upper and Lower Canada. It sweeps away the boundary line between the provinces so far as regards matters common to the whole people—it places all on an equal level—and the members of the federal legislature will meet at last as citizens of a common country. The questions that used to excite the most hostile feelings among us have been taken away from the general legislature, and placed under the control of the local bodies. No man need hereafter be debarred from success in public life because his views, how-ever popular in his own section, are unpopular in the other, for he will not have to deal with sectional questions; and the temptation to the government of the day to make capital out of local prejudices will be greatly lessened, if not altogether at an end.

“*I am further in favour of this scheme because it will bring to an end the sectional discord between Upper and Lower Canada.*”

What has rendered prominent public men in one section utterly unpopular in the other in past years? Has it been our views on trade and commerce—immigration—land settlement—the canal system—the tariff—or any other of the great questions of national interest? No; it was from our views as to the applying of public money to local purposes—the allotment of public lands to local purposes—the building of local roads, bridges, and landing-piers with public funds—the chartering of ecclesiastical institutions—the granting of public money for sectarian purposes—the interference with our school system—and similar matters, that the hot feuds between Upper and Lower Canada have chiefly arisen, and caused our public men, the more faithful they were to the opinions and wishes of one section, to be the more unpopular in the other. A most happy day will it be for Canada when this bill goes into effect, and all these subjects of discord are swept from the discussion of our legislature.

I am further in favour of this scheme as a remedial measure, because it brings to an end the doubt that has so long hung over our position, and gives a stability to our future in the eyes of the world that could not otherwise have been attained.

HON. MR. HOLTON: Hear, hear!

MR. BROWN: The hon. member for Chateauguay cries “hear, hear” in a very credulous tone; but the hon. member should be one of the very last to express doubts on this point. Has he not, for many years, admitted the absolute necessity of constitutional changes, ere peace and prosperity could be established in our land? Has he not taken part in the contests to obtain those changes? Has he not experienced the harsh and hostile feelings that have pervaded this House and the whole country? And did he not sign the report of my committee last session, declaring a federal union to be the true solution of our troubles, political and constitutional? And does the honourable member think these matters were not well known in the United States, and that the hope of our annexation to the republic was not kept alive by them from year to year? Does he fancy that our discords and discontent were not well known in Great Britain, and that the capitalist and the emigrant were not influenced by our distractions? Does he fancy that people abroad, as well as at home, did not perfectly understand that Upper Canada would not much longer submit to the injustice from which she suffered; and that until the future relations of the two sections were adjusted, no one could predict safely what our future position might be?

But when the measure before us has been adopted—when justice has been done to both sections—when all are placed on an equal footing—when the sectional matters that rent us have been handed over to sectional control—when sectional expenditure shall be placed on sectional shoulders—will not a sense of security and stability be inspired which we never before enjoyed, and never could have enjoyed under existing circumstances?

Viewed then from a merely Canadian stand-point—viewed solely as a remedial measure—I fearlessly assert that the scheme in the Speaker’s hands is a just and satisfactory remedy for the evils and injustice that have so long distracted the province; and so strongly do I feel this, that were every word of objection urged against our union with the Maritime Provinces just and true to the very letter, I would not hesitate to adopt the union as the price of a measure of constitutional reform in Canada so just and so complete as now proposed. So far from the objections urged against union with the Maritime Provinces being sound, so far from union with them being a drawback to this measure, I regard it as the crowning advantage of the whole scheme.

“ I would not hesitate to adopt the union as the price of a measure of constitutional reform in Canada so just and so complete as now proposed.”

I make no pretension to having been in past years an advocate of the immediate union of the British American colonies. I always felt and always said that no statesman could doubt that such was the best and almost the certain future destiny of those colonies; but I doubted greatly whether the right time for the movement had yet arrived. I knew little of the Maritime Provinces or the feelings of their people; the negotiations for a union were likely to be difficult and long protracted; and I was unwilling to accept the hope of a measure so remote and so uncertain in lieu of the practical remedy for practical evils in Canada which we were earnestly seeking to obtain, and which our own legislature had the power immediately to grant.

But of late all this has been changed. The circumstances are entirely altered. A revolution has occurred in Great Britain on the subject of colonial relations to the parent state—the government of the United States has become a great warlike power—our commercial relations with the republic are seriously threatened—and every man in British America has now placed before him for solution the practical question. What shall be done in view of the changed relations on which we are about to enter? Shall we continue to struggle along as isolated communities, or shall we unite cordially together to extend our commerce, to develop the resources of our country, and to defend our soil?

But more than this: many of us have learned, since we last met here, far more of the Maritime Provinces than we ever did before. We have visited the Maritime Provinces—we have seen the country—we have met the people and marked their intelligence, their industry and their frugality—we have investigated their public affairs and found them satisfactory—we have discussed terms of union with their statesmen, and found that no insuperable obstacle to union exists, and no necessity for long delay. We come to the consideration of the question to-day in a totally different position from what we ever did before; and if the House will grant me its indulgence, I think I can present unanswerable arguments to show that this union of all British America should be heartily and promptly accepted by all the provinces.

I am in favour of a union of the British American colonies, first, because it will raise us from the attitude of a number of inconsiderable colonies into a great and powerful people. The united population of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, is at this moment very close on four

millions of souls. Now, there are in Europe forty-eight sovereign states, and out of that number there are only eleven having a greater population than these colonies united, while three of the eleven are so little ahead of us that before the next census is taken, in 1871, we shall stand equal in population to the ninth sovereign state of Europe. Then the public revenues of the united provinces for 1864 were \$13,260,000, and their expenditures summed up to \$12,507,000. And large as these sums may appear, it is satisfactory to know that the taxation of British America—were there no reduction from present burdens, which I am sure there will be—will be one-third less per head than the taxation of England or France. There are only five or six countries in Europe in which the taxation is less than ours will be, and these, moreover, are either petty principalities or states which do not enjoy a very high degree of civilization.

“*I am in favour of a union of the British American colonies, first, because it will raise us from the attitude of a number of inconsiderable colonies into a great and powerful people.*”

Then, as regards the imports and exports of the united provinces, they summed up in 1863 to the following dimensions: Imports, \$70,600,963; exports, \$66,846,604; total trade, \$137,447,567. Now, I should like honourable gentlemen to notice this fact, that in 1793—long after the United States had achieved their independence and established a settled government—their exports and imports did not amount to one-third what ours do at this moment. There are few states in Europe, and those with a vastly greater population than ours, that can boast of anything like the extent of foreign commerce that now passes through our hands.

Then, as to our agricultural resources, I find that 45,638,854 acres have passed from the governments of these colonies into private hands, of which only 13,128,229 are yet tilled, and 32,510,625 acres have still to be brought into cultivation. The whole of these forty-five millions are picked lands—most of them selected by the early settlers in this country; and if our annual agricultural products are so great now, what will they be when the thirty-two millions yet to pass under the plough have been brought into cultivation? And what will they not be when the vast tracts still held by government are peopled with hardy settlers? According to the census of 1861, the value of the agricultural productions of the previous year in the united provinces of British America was \$120,000,000; and if we add to that the garden products, and the improvements made on new lands by the agricultural labourers of the provinces, it will be found that the actual product of the industry of our farmers in that year was \$150,000,000. The assessed value of our farms—which is always greatly less than the real value—was \$550,000,000 in the year 1861.

Then, in regard to the minerals of the united provinces; what vast fields of profitable industry will we have in the great coal beds of Nova Scotia, in the iron deposits found all over the provinces, in the exhaustless copper regions of Lakes Huron and Superior and the eastern townships of Lower Canada, and in the gold mines of the Chaudière and Nova Scotia. And if the mind stretches from the western bounds of civilization through those great north-western regions, which we hope ere long will be ours, to the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, what vast sources of wealth to the fur trader, the miner, the gold hunter and the agriculturist, lie there ready to be developed.

Nor can another source of wealth be altogether forgotten. The President of the United States is said recently to have declared that the produce of the petroleum wells of the United States will in half a dozen

years pay off the whole national debt of the republic. Well, we too have “struck oil,” and every day brings us intelligence of fresh discoveries, and if the enormous debt of our neighbours may possibly be met by the oily stream, may we not hope that some material addition to our annual industrial revenue may flow from our petroleum regions? Another vast branch of British American industry is the timber and lumber trade. In the year 1862 our saw-mills turned out not less than 772,000,000 feet of manufactured lumber, and our whole timber exports summed up to the value of \$15,000,000.

The manufacturing interests of the provinces, too, are fast rising into importance; agricultural implement works, woollen factories and cotton mills, tanneries and shoe factories, iron works and rolling mills, flax works and paper mills, and many other extensive and profitable mechanical establishments are springing up among us, and rapidly extending their operations. And to add to all, we have already 2,500 miles of railway, 4,000 miles of electric telegraph, and the noblest canal system in the world, but which, I hope, will soon be infinitely improved.

These are some examples of the industrial spectacle British America will present after the union has been accomplished; and I ask any member of this House to say whether we will not, when thus united, occupy a position in the eyes of the world, and command a degree of respect and influence, that we never can enjoy as separate provinces? Must it not affect the decision of many an intending emigrant, when he is told not of the fishing and mining pursuits of Nova Scotia, or of the ship-building of New Brunswick, or of the timber trade of Lower Canada, or of the agriculture of Upper Canada, but when he is shown all these in one view, as the collective industrial pursuits of British America?

“*This union will inspire new confidence in our stability, and exercise the most beneficial influence on all our affairs.*”

I am persuaded that this union will inspire new confidence in our stability, and exercise the most beneficial influence on all our affairs. I believe it will raise the value of our public securities, that it will draw capital to our shores, and secure the prosecution of all legitimate enterprises; and what I saw while in England, a few weeks ago, would alone have convinced me of this. Wherever you went you encountered the most marked evidence of the gratification with which the confederation scheme was received by all classes of the people, and the deep interest taken in its success. Let me state one fact in illustration. For some time previous to November last our securities had gone very low down in the market, in consequence, as my honourable friend the Finance Minister explained the other night, of the war raging on our borders, the uncertainty which hung over the future of this province, and the fear that we might be involved in trouble with our neighbours. Our five per cent. debentures went down in the market so low as 71, but they recovered from 71 to 75, I think, upon the day the resolutions for confederation, which we are now discussing, reached London. Well, the resolutions were published in the London papers, with eulogistic editorial articles, and the immediate effect of the scheme upon the public mind was such that our five per cents rose from 75 to 92.

HON. MR. HOLTON: What has put them down since?

HON. MR. BROWN: I will presently tell the honourable gentleman what has put them down since. But I say that, if anything could show more clearly than another the effect this union is to have on our position over the world, it is a fact like this, that our securities went up 17 per cent. in consequence of the publication of the details of our scheme. The honourable member for Chateauguay asks, “What put them down

again?" I will tell him. They remained at 91 or 92 until the news came that a raid had been made from Canada into the United States, that the raiders had been arrested and brought before a Canadian court, and that upon technical legal grounds, not only had they been set free, but the money of which they had robbed the banks had been handed over to the robbers. The effect of this news, coupled with General Dix's order, was to drive down our securities 11 per cent. almost in one day. But, as my honourable friend the Finance Minister suggests, this is but an additional proof of the accuracy of the argument I have been sustaining—for this would not have happened, at all events to the same extent, if all the provinces had been united and prepared, as we are now proposing, not only for purposes of commerce but for purposes of defence.

“ I go heartily for the union, because it will throw down the barriers of trade and give us the control of a market of four millions of people.”

Secondly, I go heartily for the union, because it will throw down the barriers of trade and give us the control of a market of four millions of people. What one thing has contributed so much to the wondrous material progress of the United States as the free passage of their products from one state to another? What has tended so much to the rapid advance of all branches of their industry as the vast extent of their home market, creating an unlimited demand for all the commodities of daily use, and stimulating the energy and ingenuity of producers? I confess that in my mind this one view of the union—the addition of nearly a million of people to our home consumers—sweeps aside all the petty objections that are averred against the scheme. What, in comparison with this great gain to our farmers and manufacturers, are the fallacious money objections which the imaginations of honourable gentlemen opposite have summoned up?

All over the world we find nations eagerly longing to extend their domains, spending large sums and waging protracted wars to possess themselves of more territory, untilled and uninhabited. Other countries offer large inducements to foreigners to emigrate to their shores—free passages, free lands, and free food and implements to start them in the world. We ourselves support costly establishments to attract immigrants to our country, and are satisfied when our annual outlay brings us fifteen or twenty thousand souls. But here is a proposal which is to add, in one day, nearly a million souls to our population—to add valuable territories to our domain, and secure to us all the advantages of a large and profitable commerce now existing. And because some of us would have liked certain of the little details otherwise arranged, we are to hesitate in accepting this alliance!

Have honourable gentlemen forgotten that the United States gladly paid twenty millions in hard cash to have Louisiana incorporated in the republic? But what was Louisiana then to the Americans in comparison with what the Maritime Provinces are at this moment to Canada? I put it to honourable gentlemen opposite—if the United States were now to offer us the state of Maine, what possible sum could be named within the compass of our ability that we would not be prepared to pay for that addition to our country? If we were offered Michigan, Iowa or Minnesota, I would like to know what sum, within the compass of Canada, we would not be prepared to pay? These states are portions of a foreign country, but here is a people owning the same allegiance as ourselves, loving the same old sod, enjoying the same laws and institutions, actuated by the same impulses and social customs; and yet when it is proposed that they shall unite with us for purposes of commerce, for the defence of our common country, and to develop the vast natural resources of our united domains, we hesitate to adopt it!

If a Canadian goes now to Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, or if a citizen of these provinces comes here, it is like going to a foreign country. The customs officer meets you at the frontier, arrests your progress, and levies his imposts on your effects. But the proposal now before us is to throw down all barriers between the provinces—to make a citizen of one, citizen of the whole; the proposal is that our farmers, and manufacturers and mechanics, shall carry their wares unquestioned into every village of the Maritime Provinces, and that they shall with equal freedom bring their fish, and their coal, and their West India produce to our three millions of inhabitants. The proposal is, that the law courts, and the schools, and the professional and industrial walks of life, throughout all the provinces, shall be thrown equally open to us all.

“*The proposal now before us is to throw down all barriers between the provinces—to make a citizen of one, citizen of the whole.*”

Thirdly, I am in favour of a union of the provinces because—and I call the attention of honourable gentlemen opposite to it—because it will make us the third maritime state of the world. When this union is accomplished, but two countries in the world will be superior in maritime influence to British America, and those are Great Britain and the United States. In 1863, no fewer than 628 vessels were built in British America, of which the aggregate tonnage was not less than 230,312 tons. There were built in Canada, 158 vessels, with 67,209 tons; Nova Scotia, 207 vessels, with 46,862 tons; New Brunswick, 137 vessels, with 85,250 tons; Prince Edward Island, 100 vessels, with 24,991 tons; Newfoundland, 26 vessels, with 6,000 tons; total, 628 vessels, with 230,312 tons. Now, in 1861—the year preceding the outbreak of the civil war—all the vessels built in the United States, with their vast seaboard and thirty millions of people, were in the aggregate but 233,193 tons—only three thousand tons in excess of the British American Provinces. And I hesitate not to affirm that if the people of British America unite cordially together in utilizing the singular facilities we unitedly possess for the extension of the shipping and ship-building interests, many years will not elapse before we greatly surpass our neighbours in this lucrative branch of industry.

HON. MR. HOLTON: How much of the shipping built in that year do we own now?

HON. MR. BROWN: How much of what the Americans built in 1861 do they own now? Why is my honourable friend so anxious to decry the industry of his country? If we have not the ships it is because we sold them, and the money is in our pockets, and we are ready to build more. In 1863 we sold ships built by our mechanics to the large amount of \$9,000,000 in gold. But if my honourable friend from Chateaugay will permit me, I am going on to indoctrinate him upon the point of the ownership of vessels.

HON. MR. HOLTON: Don't!

HON. MR. BROWN: Ah! My honourable friend does not require to be instructed; well, will he tell us how many tons of shipping are now owned by British America?

HON. MR. HOLTON: I am aware that most of the vessels my honourable friend speaks of, and the building of which he cites as a proof that we will be a great maritime power, were sold abroad. Building ships is a good thing, and selling them is a better, but that does not prove us to be a great maritime power.

HON. MR. BROWN: My honourable friend cannot eat his cake and have it too, If we got \$9,000,000 for a portion of the ships we built in 1863, it is clear we cannot own them also. It did not require a man of great wisdom to find out that. But I was going on to show the amount of shipping that was owned in these provinces. I hold in my hand a statement of the vessels owned and registered in British America, made up to

the latest dates, and I find that the provinces unitedly own not fewer than 8,530 vessels, with an aggregate tonnage of not less than 952,246 tons.

HON. MR. HOLTON: Sea-going?

HON. MR. BROWN: Sea-going and inland.

HON. MR. HOLTON (ironically): Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BROWN: Why is my honourable friend so anxious to depreciate? Is it then so deplorable a thing to own inland vessels? None knows better than my honourable friend when to buy and when to sell—and yet, I greatly mistake if there was not a time when my honourable friend thought it not so bad a thing to be the owner of ships and steamers on our inland seas. Am I wrong in believing that my honourable friend laid the foundation of his well-merited fortune in the carrying trade of the lakes? And is it for him, from momentary partisanship, to depreciate such an important branch of national industry? What matters where the ship floats, if she is a good and a sound ship?—and the inland tonnage includes so many steamers, that in value it will compare favourably with that of the sea-going. On the 31st December, 1864, Canada owned 2,311 vessels, of 287,187 tons; in 1863, Nova Scotia owned 3,539 vessels, of 309,554 tons; New Brunswick, 891 vessels, of 211,680 tons; Prince Edward Island, 360 vessels, of 34,222 tons; Newfoundland, 1,429 vessels, of 89,603 tons; total, 8,530 vessels, of 932,246 tons.

Now, it is quite true that the United States have a much larger commercial navy than this, and Great Britain a vastly larger one; but it is equally true that the country next to them in importance is France, and that notwithstanding her thirty-five millions of people, large foreign trade, and extensive sea-coast, she owns but 60,000 tons of shipping more than British America. In 1860, the aggregate commercial navy of France was but 996,124 tons. I say, then, that even as ship-owners the British American confederacy will occupy from the first a proud place among the maritime states of the world, and that when her ships hoist a distinctive flag alongside the Cross of Red, there will be few seas in which it will not be unfurled.

And let me here mention a fact which came under my notice while recently in the Lower Provinces—a fact of great importance, and from which, I think, we, who are more inland, may well profit. I learned that, as in the British Isles, a system of joint-stock ship-building has been spreading over many parts of the Maritime Provinces. Ships are built and owned in small shares—say in sixteenth, thirty-second, or sixty-fourth parts, and all classes of the people are taking small ventures in the trade. Most of the ships so built are sold, but a portion, and an increasing portion every year, are sailed, and sailed with profit, by the original joint-stock holders. I was delighted to be told that some of those clipper vessels which we often hear of as making wonderful trips from China and India and Australia to British ports, are vessels built and owned in New Brunswick, under this joint-stock system.

So much for the building and ownership of ships; now let me show you what will be the strength of the united provinces in seafaring men. By the census of 1861, it appears that the number of sailors and fishermen then in Canada was 5,958; in Nova Scotia, 19,637; in New Brunswick, 2,765; in Prince Edward Island, 2,318; in Newfoundland, 38,578; total, 69,256. Whether regarded merely as a lucrative branch of industry, or as affecting our maritime position before the world, or as a bulwark of defence in time of need, this one fact that British America will have a combined force of 70,000 seamen, appears to me an immense argument in favour of the union. And let us look at the products of the labour of a portion of these men—the fishermen.

From the latest returns I have been able to meet with, I find the joint products of our sea-coasts and inland lakes were, in the years named, estimated at the following values: Upper Canada (1859), \$380,000; Lower Canada (1862), \$703,895; Nova Scotia (1861), \$2,072,081; New Brunswick (1861), \$518,530; Newfoundland (1861), \$6,347,730; total, \$10,022,236. I was unable to find any estimate as regards Prince Edward Island, but fancy the amount there must be about \$200,000. But be this as it may, so valuable a fishing

trade as this of the united provinces does not exist in any part of the world. And no doubt these estimates are far under the fact, as a large portion of the delicious food drawn by our people from the sea and inland waters could not possibly be included in the returns of the fishery inspectors.

And let us observe, for a moment, the important part played by this fishing industry in the foreign commerce of the provinces. The exports of products of the sea in the year 1863 were as follows: From Canada, \$789,913; Nova Scotia, \$2,390,661; New Brunswick (1862), \$303,477; Newfoundland, \$4,090,970; Prince Edward Island, \$121,000; total exports, \$7,696,021. Add to this, \$9,000,000 received in the same year for new ships, and we have \$16,696,021 as one year's foreign exports of our ship-building and fishing interests. With such facts before us as the result of only a partially developed traffic, may we not fearlessly look forward to the future in the confident hope of still more gratifying results, when, by combined and energetic action, a new impetus has been given to these valuable branches of industry?

But there remains a still more singular comparison to be made. I refer to the statement of ships annually entering and leaving our ports. Of course every one comprehends that a large amount of the tonnage entering and leaving ports on the upper lakes is repeated in the returns over and over again. This is the case, for instance, with the ferry boats between the American and Canadian shores that carry passengers and a small quantity of goods. It would be unfair to put down the tonnage of such boats, every time they enter or leave a port, as foreign commerce. Still there is a large amount of valuable shipping engaged in the inland trade, and a vast amount of freight is carried between the countries; and the only just plan is to state separately that which is sea-going shipping and that which is inland. Acting on this plan, I find that in 1863, the tonnage between Canada and foreign ports was as follows:

FOREIGN PORTS	INWARDS	OUTWARDS	TOTAL
Canada	1,041,309	1,091,895	2,133,204
Nova Scotia	712,939	719,915	1,432,854
New Brunswick	659,258	727,727	1,386,985
P. E. Island (1862)	69,080	81,208	150,288
Newfoundland	156,578	148,610	305,188
	2,639,164	2,769,355	5,408,519

INLAND NAVIGATION			
Canada	3,538,701	3,368,432	6,907,133
Total tons	6,177,865	6,137,787	12,315,652

Now, the United States are in the same position as we are in respect to this inland traffic, and they include it in their returns as is done here. And what do you think is the difference between their tonnage and ours? Why, ours is over twelve millions and theirs is but sixteen millions. There are not four millions of tons of difference between the two. And let it be recollected that the United States have had seventy years start of us. As regards France, the whole amount of shipping that entered and left the ports of that great country in one year was but 8,456,734 tons—four millions of tons less than that of the British American Provinces. May we not then, when this union is accomplished, fairly claim to be the third maritime state of the world; and may we not even entertain the hope that, at some future day, a still higher position is not beyond our reach, when the days of puberty have been passed and the strength of manhood has been reached?

I ask honourable gentlemen, in looking at these figures, to consider what the effect must be when they are set down thus collectively, side by side, in official commercial returns, in comparison with the com-

merce of all the great maritime states? Will it not strengthen our position abroad? Will it not give us a degree of influence and importance to have it known that British America wields so large a share of the world's commerce? And if honourable gentlemen will still further consider the deep importance to Canada, in her inland position, of exercising her just influence in the control of so valuable a maritime interest, I think they will come to the conclusion that all the objections urged against this union are, in the balance of its advantages, utterly contemptible.

“Will it not give us a degree of influence and importance to have it known that British America wields so large a share of the world's commerce?”

In the fourth place, I go for a union of the provinces, because it will give a new start to immigration into our country. It will bring us out anew prominently before the world—it will turn earnest attention to our re-sources, and bring to our shores a stream of immigration greater, and of a better class, than we ever had before. I was in England when the first public announcement of this scheme was made, and witnessed, with pleasure, the marked impression it produced. You could not go abroad, you could not enter into any company, in any class of society, where Canada or the British American Provinces were mentioned, but you heard this union movement spoken of almost with enthusiasm.

And I say that it is desirable that this scheme should not be delayed, but be carried through promptly and vigorously. I hesitate not to say that it should be accomplished with a vigorous effort to give a new impetus to our industrial enterprises, to open up fresh lands for settlement, and to cheapen the transport of our produce to the sea-board. With the consummation of this union, I trust we will have a new immigration and a new land settlement policy—that we will ascertain every lot of land we actually own, so that a printed list may be placed in the hands of every immigrant—that the petty price we have been heretofore exacting will no longer be exacted, but that to actual settlers, who come among us to hew out for themselves and their children homes in the forest, no burthen or condition will be demanded, beyond resident occupation for a certain number of years, and a fixed amount of improvement on the land.

HON. MR. HOLTON: Unfortunately for your argument, the lands will be in the hands of the local governments.

HON. MR. BROWN: So much the better. My honourable friend can manage his public lands in Lower Canada as he likes, and we will manage ours. And, speaking for the western section, I am bound to say there are very few shrewd men in Upper Canada who do not feel that far more public benefit is to be gained from the industry of a hardy actual settler upon 100 acres of land given to him free, than the trumpery \$150 that can be squeezed out of him as its price, the payment of which keeps him in trouble perhaps for years, and retards the progress of the country. On this question of immigration turns, in my opinion, the whole future success of this great scheme which we are now discussing.

Why, there is hardly a political and financial or social problem suggested by this union that does not find its best solution in a large influx of immigration. The larger our population, the greater will be our productions, the more valuable our exports, and the greater our ability to develop the resources of our country. The greater the number of tax-payers, and the more densely they are settled, the more lightly will the burden of taxation fall upon us all. And in this question of immigration is found the only true solution of the problem of defence. Fill up our vacant lands, double our population, and we will at once be in a pos-

ition to meet promptly and effectually any invader who may put his foot with hostile intent upon our soil.

And this question of immigration naturally brings me to the great subject of the North-West Territories. The resolutions before us recognize the immediate necessity of those great territories being brought within the confederation and opened up for settlement. But I am told that, while the Intercolonial Railroad has been made an absolute condition of the compact, the opening up of the great west and the enlargement of our canals have been left in doubt. Now, nothing can be more unjust than this. Let me read the resolutions:

“The general government shall secure, without delay, the completion of the Intercolonial Railway from Rivière du Loup, through New Brunswick to Truro, in Nova Scotia,

“The communications with the North-Western Territory, and the improvements required for the development of the trade of the great west with the seaboard, are regarded by this conference as subjects of the highest importance to the federated provinces, and shall be prosecuted at the earliest possible period that the state of the finances will permit.”

The confederation is, therefore, clearly committed to the carrying out of both these enterprises. I doubt if there was a member of the conference who did not consider that the opening up of the north-west and the improvement of our canal system, were not as clearly for the advantage of the Lower Provinces as for the interests of Upper Canada. Indeed, one gentleman held that the Lower Provinces were more interested—they wished to get their products into the west, they wanted a back country as much as we did, they wanted to be the carriers for that great country—and they were, therefore, to say the least, as much interested in these questions as we were.

But honourable gentlemen lay stress upon the point that, while the one enterprise is to be undertaken at once, the other is not to be commenced until the state of the finances will permit. No doubt this is correct, and the reason for it is simply this: The money has already been found for the Intercolonial Railway. They must be well aware that the late government (the Macdonald-Sicotte administration) agreed to build the Intercolonial Railway, and obtained from the Imperial government a guarantee of the debentures for building it, so that that money is ready, at a very low rate of interest, whenever required. We know where to find the money for one enterprise at a rate we are able to bear, and can thus at once go on with a work which must be gone on with if this union is to be consummated. But we don't know this of the other great work; and we all felt that it would be exceedingly indiscreet—I, myself, as the special advocate of opening up the great west and of the enlargement of our canals, felt that I could not put my name to a document which declared that at all hazards, while our five per cent. debentures were quoted at 75 or 80 per cent. in the money market, we would commence at once, without an hour's delay, any great public work whatever.

Honourable gentlemen opposite must not imagine that they have to do with a set of tricksters in the thirty-three gentlemen who composed that conference. What we have said in our resolutions was deliberately adopted, in the honest sense of the words employed, and not for purposes of deception. Both works are to go on at the earliest possible moment our finances will permit, and honourable gentlemen will find the members of the cabinet, from Lower as well as from Upper Canada, actuated by the hearty desire to have this whole scheme carried out in its fair meaning.

When recently in England, I was charged to negotiate with the Imperial government for the opening up of the North-West Territories. In a few days the papers will be laid before the House, and it will then be seen whether or not this government is in earnest in that matter. The gentlemen who formed the conference at Quebec did not enter upon their work with the miserable idea of getting the advantage of each other, but with a due sense of the greatness of the work they had on hand, with an earnest desire to do justice to all, and keeping always in mind that what would benefit one section in such a union must necessarily benefit the whole.

It has always appeared to me that the opening up of the north-west ought to be one of the most cher-

ished projects of my honourable friends from Lower Canada. During the discussion on the question for some years back I had occasion to dip deep in north-west lore—into those singularly interesting narratives of life and travels in the north-west in the olden time, and into the history of the struggles for commercial dominancy in the great fur-bearing regions; and it has always struck me that the French Canadian people have cause to look back with pride to the bold and successful part they played in the adventures of those days. Nothing perhaps has tended more to create their present national character than the vigorous habits, the power of endurance, the aptitude for out-door life, acquired in their prosecution of the north-west fur trade. Well may they look forward with anxiety to the realization of this part of our scheme, in confident hope that the great north-western traffic shall be once more opened up to the hardy French Canadian traders and voyageurs.

Last year furs to the value of £280,000 stg. (\$1,400,000) were carried from that territory by the Hudson's Bay Company—smuggled off through the ice-bound regions of James' Bay—that the pretence of the barrenness of the country, and the difficulty of conveying merchandise by the natural route of the St. Lawrence, may be kept up a little longer. The carrying of merchandise into that country, and bringing down the bales of pelts ought to be ours, and must ere long be ours, as in the days of yore; and when the fertile plains of that great Saskatchewan territory are opened up for settlement and cultivation, I am confident that it will not only add immensely to our annual agricultural products, but bring us sources of mineral and other wealth on which at present we do not reckon.

While speaking on this question of immigration, I would remind the House, and it is impossible to urge it too strongly, that these provinces are now presented to the world in a very disadvantageous aspect, as different communities. When a party in Europe thinks of emigrating here, he has to ascertain separately all about New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, and Upper and Lower Canada, and if by chance he meets a party from some one of these provinces, he has to listen to a picture of the merits of that one section in high contrast to the demerits of all the rest, and the result is the poor man's ideas about us become a mass of confusion. On the other hand, if he seeks to know the inducements for emigration to New South Wales or New Zealand, he gets it in one picture—in an official form—and the offer is made to pay his passage to these lands of hope. A large amount of emigration, and of money which the emigrant takes with him, are thus carried off to a much more distant land than this, and one that does not offer equal inducements to the settler. But how different will all this be when these provinces stand united, and present to emigrants a combination of so many branches of profitable industry?

In turning over some United States statistics, I recently fell upon a very curious official calculation, made by the United States government, as to the value of immigration. By the census of 1861 the population of the United States was over thirty millions; and this calculation was to ascertain what the population would have been had there been no immigration into the country, but the population had been left to advance solely by its own natural increase. And what do you think was the result? Why, it is shown that if the United States had received all the immigrants that came to them up to 1820, and then stopped receiving them, the population, at this moment, instead of 30,000,000, would have been but 14,601,485. It is shown that if immigration had gone on until 1810, and stopped then, the population now would have been only 12,678,562. Had it stopped in 1800, the population now would have been 10,462,944; and had it stopped in 1790, the population now, instead of 30,000,000, would have been but 8,789,969.

These are most valuable facts, which should be impressed on the mind of every public man in British America. If we wish our country to progress, we should not leave a single stone unturned to attract the tide of emigration in this direction; and I know no better method of securing that result, than the gathering into one of these five provinces, and presenting ourselves to the world in the advantageous light which, when united, we would occupy.

Fifthly, I am in favour of a union of these provinces, because it will enable us to meet, without alarm, the abrogation of the American reciprocity treaty, in case the United States should insist on its abolition. I

do not believe that the American government is so insane as to repeal that treaty. But it is always well to be prepared for contingencies; and I have no hesitation in saying that if they do repeal it, should this union of British America go on, a fresh outlet for our commerce will be opened up to us quite as advantageous as the American trade has ever been. I have never heretofore ventured to make this assertion, for I know well what a serious task it is to change, in one day, the commercial relations of such a country as this. When the traffic of a country has passed for a lengthened period through a particular channel, any serious change of that channel tends, for a time, to the embarrassment of business men, and causes serious injury to individuals, if not the whole community. Such a change we in Canada had in 1847. But as it was in 1847, so it will be in 1866, if the reciprocity treaty is abolished. Our agricultural interest had been built up on the protective legislation of Great Britain, and in 1847 it was suddenly brought to an end. We suffered severely, in consequence, for some years; but by degrees new channels for our trade opened up—the reciprocity treaty was negotiated—and we have been more prosperous since 1847 than we ever were before.

And so, I have not a doubt, will it be in the event of the reciprocity treaty being abolished. Profitable as that treaty has unquestionably been to us—and it has been more profit-able to the Americans—still, were it brought to an end to-morrow, though we would suffer a while from the change, I am convinced the ultimate result would be that other foreign markets would be opened to us quite as profitable, and that we would speedily build up our trade on a sounder basis than at present. A close examination of the working of the reciprocity treaty discloses facts of vital importance to the merits of the question, to which you never hear the slightest allusion made by American speakers or writers. Our neighbours, in speaking of the treaty, keep constantly telling us of the Canadian trade—what they take from Canada and what Canada takes from them. Their whole story is about the buying and selling of commodities in Canada. Not a whisper do you ever hear from them about their buying and selling with the Maritime Provinces—not a word about the enormous carrying trade for all the provinces which they monopolize—not a word of the large sums drawn from us for our vast traffic over their railways and canals—and not a whisper as to their immense profits from fishing in our waters, secured to them by the treaty. No; all we hear of is the exports and imports of Canada—all is silence as to other parts of the treaty.

But it must not be forgotten that if the treaty is abolished and this union is accomplished, an abolition of reciprocity with Canada means abolition of reciprocity with all the British American provinces—means bringing to an end the right of the Americans to fish in our waters; their right to use our canals; their right to the navigation of the St. Lawrence; and that it also implies the taking out of their hands the vast and lucrative carrying trade they now have from us. It must be always kept in mind that though the United States purchase from Canada a large amount of agricultural products, a great portion of what they purchase does not go into consumption in the states, but is merely purchased for transmission to Great Britain and the West India markets. They merely act as commission agents and carriers in such transactions, and splendid profits they make out of the business.

But beyond this, another large portion of these produce purchases, for which they take so much credit to themselves, they buy in the same manner for export to the Maritime Provinces of British America, reaping all the benefit of the sea-going as well as the inland freight—charges and commissions. The commercial returns of the Lower Provinces show not only that the Americans send a large quantity of their own farm products to those provinces, but a considerable amount of what they (the Americans) receive from us, thereby gaining the double advantage of the carrying trade through the United States to the seaboard, and then by sea to the Lower Provinces. I hold in my hand a return of the articles purchased by the Maritime Provinces from the United States in 1863, which Canada could have supplied. I will not detain the House by reading it, but any member who desires can have it for examination. I may state, however, in brief, that in that year the breadstuffs alone bought by the Lower Provinces amounted to no less than \$4,447,207; that the import of meats, fresh and cured, amounted to \$659,917; and that the total value of products which the Lower Provinces might have bought more advantageously from us, summed up to over seven millions of dollars.

The Americans must therefore bear in mind, that if they abolish the reciprocity treaty, they will not only lose that seven millions which they now receive for their products, but the carrying trade which goes with it. But, on the other hand, when we have this union, these products will, as they naturally should, go down the St. Lawrence, not only for the advantage of our farmers, but swelling the volume of our own shipping interests. The Americans hitherto have had a large portion of our carrying trade; they have brought us our goods—even our European goods—and taken our produce not only to Europe but even to the Lower Provinces; and I say one of the best features of this union is, that if in our commercial relations with the United States we are compelled by them to meet fire with fire, it will enable us to stop this improvidence, and turn the current of our own trade into our own waters.

Far be it from me to say I am an advocate of a coercive commercial policy; on the contrary, entire freedom of trade, in my opinion, is what we in this country should strive for. Without hesitation, I would, to-morrow, throw open the whole of our trade and the whole of our waters to the United States, if they did the same to us. But if they tell us, in the face of all the advantages they get by reciprocity, that they are determined to put a stop to it, and if this is done through a hostile feeling to us—deeply as I should regret that this should be the first use made by the northern states of their new-found liberty—then, I say, we have a policy, and a good policy, of our own to fall back upon.

And let me say a word as to the effect of the repeal of reciprocity on the American fishing interest. The Americans, in 1851, had engaged in the cod and mackerel fishing, in our waters, shipping to the extent of 129,014 tons; but under the influence of the reciprocity treaty it rose, in 1861, to 192,662—an increase, in ten years, of upwards of 63,000 tons, or fifty per cent. The repeal of reciprocity will give us back all this increase, and more, for it will be a very different thing in the future from what it was formerly to poach on our fishing grounds, when these provinces are united and determined to protect the fisheries of the gulf. This fishing interest is one which may be cultivated to an extent difficult, perhaps, for many of us to conceive. But we have only to look at the amount of fish taken from our waters by the Americans and other nations, and the advantages we possess, to perceive that if we apply ourselves, as a united people, to foster that trade, we can vastly increase the great traffic we now enjoy.

On the whole, then, I come firmly to the conclusion that, in view of the possible stoppage of the American reciprocity treaty, and our being compelled to find new channels for our trade, this union presents to us advantages, in comparison with which any objection that has been offered, or can be offered to it, is utterly insignificant.

“*In the event of war, it will enable all the colonies to defend themselves better, and give more efficient aid to the empire, than they could do separately.*”

Sixthly, I am in favour of the union of the provinces, because, in the event of war, it will enable all the colonies to defend themselves better, and give more efficient aid to the empire, than they could do separately. I am not one of those who ever had the war-fever; I have not believed in getting up large armaments in this country; I have never doubted that a military spirit, to a certain extent, did necessarily form part of the character of a great people; but I felt that Canada had not yet reached that stage in her progress when she could safely assume the duty of defence; and that, so long as peace continued and the mother country threw her shield around us, it was well for us to cultivate our fields and grow in numbers and material strength, until we could look our enemies fearlessly in the face.

But it must be admitted—and there is no use of closing our eyes to the fact—that this question of defence has been placed, within the last two years, in a totally different position from what it ever occupied before. The time has come—it matters not what political party may be in power in England—when Britain will insist on a reconsideration of the military relations which a great colony, such as Canada, ought to hold to the empire. And I am free to admit that it is a fair and just demand. We may doubt whether some of the demands that have been made upon us, without regard to our peculiar position at the moment, and without any attempt to discuss the question with us in all its breadth, were either just or well considered. But of this I think there can be no doubt, that when the time comes in the history of any colony that it has overcome the burdens and embarrassments of early settlement, and has entered on a career of permanent progress and prosperity, it is only fair and right that it should contribute its quota to the defence of the empire.

What that quota ought to be, I think, is a matter for grave deliberation and discussion, as well as the measure of assistance the colony may look for, in time of war, from the parent state; and assuredly, it is in this spirit that the present Imperial government is desirous of approaching the question. I am persuaded that nothing more than that which is fairly due at our hands will be demanded from us, and anything less than this, I am sure, the people of Canada do not desire. In the conversations I had, while in England, with public men of different politics, while I found many who considered that the connection between Canada and England involved the mother country in some danger of war with the powerful state upon our borders, and that the colonial system devolved heavy and unreasonable burdens upon the mother country, and while a still larger number thought we had not acted as cordially and energetically as we ought in organizing our militia for the defence of the province, still I did not meet one public man, of any stripe of politics, who did not readily and heartily declare that, in case of the invasion of Canada, the honour of Great Britain would be at stake, and the whole strength of the empire would be unhesitatingly marshalled in our defence.

“ I have no belief that the Americans have the slightest thought of attacking us. I cannot believe that the first use of their new-found liberty will be the invasion, totally unprovoked, of a peaceful province.”

But, coupled with this, was the invariable and most reasonable declaration that a share of the burden of defence, in peace and in war, we must contribute. And this stipulation applies not only to Canada, but to every one of the colonies. Already the Indian empire has been made to pay the whole expense of her military establishment. The Australian colonies have agreed to pay £40 sterling per man for every soldier sent there. This system is being gradually extended; and, union or no union, assuredly every one of these British American colonies will be called upon to bear her fair share towards the defence of the empire. And who will deny that it is a just demand, and that great colonies such as these should be proud to meet it in a frank and earnest spirit. Nothing, I am persuaded, could be more foreign to the ideas of the people of Canada, than that the people of England should be unfairly taxed for service rendered to this province.

Now, the question presented to us is simply this: Will these contributions which Canada and the other provinces must hereafter make to the defence of the empire be better rendered by a hardy, energetic population, acting as one people, than as five or six separate communities? There is no doubt about it.

But not only do our changed relations towards the mother country call on us to assume the new duty of military defence —our changed relations towards the neighbouring republic compel us to do so. For myself,

I have no belief that the Americans have the slightest thought of attacking us. I cannot believe that the first use of their new-found liberty will be the invasion, totally unprovoked, of a peaceful province. I fancy that they have had quite enough of war for a good many years to come, and that such a war as one with England would certainly be the last they are likely to provoke. There is no better mode of warding off war when it is threatened than to be prepared for it if it comes. The Americans are now a warlike people. They have large armies, a powerful navy, an unlimited supply of warlike munitions, and the carnage of war has to them been stripped of its horrors. The American side of our lines already bristles with works of defence, and unless we are willing to live at the mercy of our neighbours, we too must put our country in a state of efficient preparation. War or no war, the necessity of placing these provinces in a thorough state of defence can no longer be postponed. Our country is coming to be regarded as undefended and indefensible—the capitalist is alarmed, and the immigrant is afraid to come among us.

Were it merely as a measure of commercial advantage, every one of these colonies must meet the question of military defence promptly and energetically. And how can we do this so efficiently and economically as by the union now proposed? I have already shown that union would give us a body of 70,000 hardy seamen ready and able to defend our sea-coasts and inland lakes; let us now see what would be the military strength of the confederation. By the last census (1861) it appears that the men (from 20 to 60 years of age) capable of bearing arms in British America, were as follows: Upper Canada, 308,955; Lower Canada, 225,620; Nova Scotia, 67,367; New Brunswick, 51,625; Newfoundland, 25,532; Prince Edward Island (from 21 to 60 years of age), 14,819; total, 693,918. With the body of efficient soldiers that might be obtained from this vast array of men, the erection of defensive works at salient points, and the force of British troops that would soon come to our aid, who can doubt that the invasion of our country would be successfully resisted?

“ I have given reasons enough to satisfy every candid man who desires the advancement of his country, why this House should go unanimously and enthusiastically for ‘the union, the whole union, and nothing but the union!’ ”

Seventhly, I am in favour of this union because it will give us a sea-board at all seasons of the year. It is not to be denied that the position of Canada, shut off as she is from the sea-board during the winter months, is far from satisfactory; and should the United States carry out their in-sane threat of abolishing the bonding system, by which our merchandise passes free through their territory, it would be still more embarrassing. The Maritime Provinces are equally cut off from communication inland. Now, this embarrassment will be ended by colonial union. The Intercolonial Railway will give us at all times access to the Atlantic through British territory. As a commercial enterprise, the Intercolonial Railway has not, I apprehend, any considerable merit; as a work of defence it has, however, many advocates; but if the union of the provinces is to go on, it is an absolute necessity; and as the price of union, were there no other argument in its favour, I heartily go for it. The advantage it will confer on the Maritime Provinces can hardly be overrated. It will make Halifax and St. John the Atlantic seaports of half a continent; it will insure to Halifax, ere long, the establishment of a line of powerful steamers running in six days from her wharves to some near point on the west coast of Ireland; and it will bring a constant stream of passengers and immigrants through those lower provinces that never otherwise would come near them.

I could go on for many hours piling up arguments in favour of this scheme, but already I have detained

the House too long, and must draw to a close. But I think I have given reasons enough to satisfy every candid man who desires the advancement of his country, why this House should go unanimously and enthusiastically for “the union, the whole union, and nothing but the union!”

Before sitting down, however, there are one or two general objections urged against the scheme which I am desirous of meeting, and I will try to do so as briefly as possible. And first, I am told that we should have made the union legislative and not federal. Undoubtedly this is a point on which different opinions may be honestly held by men sincerely seeking the same ends; but, speaking my own views, I think we came to a most wise conclusion. Had we continued the present legislative union, we must have continued with it the unjust system of taxation for local purposes that now exists, and the sectional bickering would have gone on as before.

And can any honourable gentleman really believe that it would have been possible for a body of men sitting at Ottawa to administer efficiently and wisely the parish business of Red River and Newfoundland and all the country between? Only think of bringing suitors and witnesses such distances to promote a bill for closing a side-line or incorporating a club! And if such a thing were desirable, would it be possible for any body of men to go through such a mass of work? Why, the Imperial parliament, with 650 members, sits for eight months in the year, and even our parliament sits three or four months; how then would it be possible for the legislature of all the provinces, with a thousand or twelve hundred bills before it, to accomplish it all? The whole year would not suffice for it—and who in these colonies is able to sacrifice his whole time to the duties of public life?

“*There is another reason why the union was not made legislative—it could not be carried. We had either to take the federal union or drop the negotiation.*”

But there is another reason why the union was not made legislative—it could not be carried. We had either to take the federal union or drop the negotiation. Not only were our friends from Lower Canada against it, but so were most of the delegates from the Maritime Provinces. There was but one choice open to us—federal union or nothing. But, in truth, the scheme now before us has all the advantages of a legislative union and a federal one as well. We have thrown over on the localities all the questions which experience has shown lead directly to local jealousy and discord, and we have retained in the hands of the general government all the powers necessary to secure a strong and efficient administration of public affairs. By placing the appointment of the judges in the hands of the general government, and the establishment of a central court of appeal, we have secured uniformity of justice over the whole land. By vesting the appointment of the lieutenant-governors in the general government, and giving a veto for all local measures, we have secured that no injustice shall be done without appeal in local legislation. For all dealings with the Imperial government and foreign countries, we have clothed the general government with the most ample powers. And finally, all matters of trade and commerce, banking and currency, and all questions common to the whole people, we have vested fully and unrestrictedly in the general government. The measure, in fact, shuns the faults of the federal and legislative systems and adopts the best parts of both, and I am well persuaded it will work efficiently and satisfactorily.

I am told that the cost of working this federation scheme will be enormous. Now, it would be a very rash thing for me, or any other person, to assert that the expense will not be great; for we all know that any system of government may be made either economical or extravagant precisely according to the discretion of those who administer it. But this I am confident of, that with ordinary discretion, far from being more costly than the existing system, a very considerable reduction may be readily effected; and one thing is quite certain, that no ingenuity could make it a more costly or extravagant system than the one we have now. Undoubtedly the mode in which the local governments shall be constructed will very much affect the cost of the whole scheme; but if we adopt (as I earnestly hope we will) simple and inexpensive machinery for local purposes, I am quite satisfied that there will be a reduction to the people of Canada on the amount they now contribute. I have great confidence in the economical effect of placing local expenditures on local shoulders, and in the salutary influence, in the same direction, of the representatives of the Maritime Provinces when they come among us.

HON. MR. HOLTON: The trouble is that they will spend our money—not theirs.

HON. MR. BROWN: The honourable gentleman is entirely wrong, and I am amazed at his making such a statement. There is no portion of the community that will pay more money, per head, to the revenue, than the people of the Maritime Provinces. If the honourable gentleman had turned up the commercial returns of those lower provinces and calculated the effect of our tariff, if applied to them—or even a tariff less than ours, for our tariff must be reduced—he would have known that they will bear their full proportion of the national burdens.

I am told that the arrangement as to the debt is unfair—that we have thrown on the federal exchequer the whole of the debts of the Maritime Provinces, but only a portion of the debt of Canada. There is not a particle of force in this objection. The whole debt of Canada is \$67,500,000, but five millions of this is due to our own people, to meet which there are certain local funds. Now, if we had thrown the whole \$67,500,000 on the federal treasury, we must also have handed over to it the local revenues, which, so far as these five millions are concerned, would have been precisely the same thing. But, as regards the public debt with which the federal government would start, it would not have been the same thing. By restricting the debt of Canada to \$62,500,000, we restricted the debt of the Maritime Provinces to the same proportion, or \$25 per head of their population; but had we thrown our whole debt of sixty-seven and a half millions on the confederation, the proportion of debt for the several Maritime Provinces must have been increased, and the whole debt very greatly augmented.

But in throwing these five millions on the local governments of Upper and Lower Canada, do we impose a burden on them they are unable to bear? Quite the contrary; for with the debt, we give them the corresponding sources of revenue from which to meet it. The local governments of Upper and Lower Canada will severally not only have funds, from the subsidy and other sources, to meet all expenditure, but a large surplus besides. I am told that this federation scheme may be all very right—it may be just, and the very thing the country needs—but this government had no authority from parliament to negotiate it. The honourable member for Cornwall (Hon. John S. Macdonald) particularly pressed this objection, and I am sorry he is not in his seat.

HON. MR. HOLTON: It is quite true.

HON. MR. CARTIER: No, the reverse is true.

HON. MR. BROWN: I am astonished to hear such a statement repeated. No one knows better than the honourable member for Chateaugay and the honourable member for Cornwall that in the ministerial explanations brought down to this House at the time of the formation of this government, it was distinctly declared that the government was formed for the special purpose of maturing a scheme of federal union, and that it would take means, during the recess, for opening negotiations with the Maritime Provinces, to bring about such a union.

Hon. MR. HOLTON: But not to conclude them.

Hon. MR. BROWN: What we have done is entirely subject to the approval of parliament. The honourable member for Cornwall is the very last man who should have raised such an objection, for he attended a caucus of the liberal members of the assembly, heard the whole plans of the government explained, precisely as they have been carried out, and he was the very person who moved that I should go into the government to give them effect.

MR. DUNKIN: And I heard something more said—that nothing should be done which did not leave the House perfectly free.

HON. MR. BROWN: I can assure my honourable friend that, as far as that goes, he never was more free in his life than now. We do not pretend to say that anything we have done binds this House; any member may object if he pleases: but I do say we received the approval of the House for opening negotiations, and it is a miserable pretence to say any-thing to the contrary. We did no more than has been done by every government, under the British system, that ever existed. We have but made a compact, subject to the approval of parliament. So far as this government is concerned, we are firmly committed to the scheme; but so far as the members of the legislature are concerned, they are as free as air; but I am confident that this House will almost unanimously accept it—and not with changes and amendments, but as a whole—as the very best compromise arrangement that can be obtained.

HON. MR. HOLTON: We have not the treaty-making power.

HON. MR. BROWN: I remember a government formed from that side of the House, and the honourable member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. Dorion) will remember it too, which made a treaty respecting the building of the Intercolonial Railroad. The honourable member for Cornwall was premier of that government, and it does not lie in his mouth now to object to what he himself did. But the honourable gentleman is entirely wrong when he says we had no power to make this compact with the Maritime Provinces. We had full power, express instructions to enter into it.

Hon. MR. HOLTON: Did the Parliament of England give you that power?

HON. MR. BROWN: No; the honourable gentleman ought to know that the treaty-making power is in the Crown—the Crown authorized us specially to make this compact, and it has heartily approved of what we did.

I am told that the people of Canada have not considered this scheme, and that we ought not to pass it without appealing to the electors for their approval. Now a statement more incorrect than this, or more injurious to the people of Canada, could not be made. They not only have considered this scheme—for fifteen years they have been earnestly considering it—but they perfectly comprehend it. If ever question was thoroughly debated in any country, the whole subject of constitutional change has been in Canada. There is not a light in which it could be placed that has not been thoroughly canvassed; and if the House will permit me, I will show from our historical record how totally absurd this objection is. The question of a federal union was agitated thirty years ago, and here is the resolution adopted by both Houses of the Imperial parliament so far back as 1837:

“That great inconvenience has been sustained by His Majesty’s subjects inhabiting the provinces of Lower Canada and Upper Canada, from the want of some adequate means for regulating and adjusting questions respecting the trade and commerce of the said provinces, and divers other questions wherein the said provinces have a common interest; and it is expedient that the legislatures of the said provinces respectively be authorized to make provision for the joint regulation and adjustment of such their common interests.”

In the instructions given to Lord Durham by the Imperial government in 1838, this passage occurs:

“It is clear that some plan must be devised to meet the just demands of Upper Canada. It will be for your Lordship, in conjunction with the committee, to consider if- this should not be done by constituting some joint legislative authority, which should preside over all questions of common interest to the two provinces, and which might be appealed to in extraordinary cases, to arbitrate between contending parties in either; preserving, however, to each province its distinct legislature, with authority in all matters of an exclusively domestic concern. If this should be your opinion, you will have further time to consider what should be the nature and limits of such authority, and all the particulars which ought to be comprehended in any scheme for its establishment.”

In Lord Durham’s admirable report of 1839, I find this passage:

“The bill should contain provisions by which any or all of the other North American colonies may, on the application of the legislature, be, with the consent of the two Canadas or their united legislature, admitted into the union on such terms as may be agreed on between them. As the mere amalgamation of the Houses of Assembly of the two provinces would not be advisable, or give at all a due representation to each, a parliamentary commission should be appointed for the purpose of forming the electoral divisions and determining the number of members to be returned on the principle of giving representation as near as may be in proportion to population. The same commission should form a plan of local government by elective bodies, subordinate to the general legislature, and exercising a complete control over such local affairs as do not come within the province of general legislation. The plan so framed should be made an Act of the Imperial parliament, so as to prevent the general legislature from encroaching on the powers of the local bodies. A general executive on an improved principle should be established, together with the supreme court of appeal for all the North American colonies.”

And here is the statement of Lord John Russell, in 1839, while introducing the original bill founded on Lord Durham’s report:

“The bill provides for the establishment of a central district at Montreal and its neighbourhood, at which the government shall be carried on, and where the assembly shall meet. The other parts of Upper and of Lower Canada are each to be divided into two districts. It is proposed that these districts should be formed for the purpose of becoming municipal districts, for the imposition of taxes and rates for all local purposes.”

My next quotation shall be from the proceedings of a body of gentlemen who made a great commotion in their day and generation—the British American League. I hold in my hand the proceedings of the league of 3rd November, 1849, and among other names mentioned I find those of the Hon. George Moffatt, Thomas Wilson, the Hon. Geo. Crawford, the Hon. Asa A. Burnham, John W. Gamble, Mr. Aikman, of Barton, Ogle R. Gowan, John Duggan, the Hon. Col. Fraser, George Benjamin, the Hon. P. M. Vankoughnet, and last, though not least, the Hon. John A. Macdonald—of whom, however, I find it recorded that he spoke in a very jocose manner. Here is the resolution of the league:

“That whether protection or reciprocity shall be conceded or withheld, it is essential to the welfare of this colony, and its future good government, that a constitution should be framed in unison with the wishes of the people, and suited to the growing importance and intelligence of the country, and that such constitution should embrace a union of the British North American Provinces on mutually advantageous and fairly arranged terms, with the concession from the mother country of enlarged powers of self-government.”

I pass on to 1856, when we had the motion and speech of my honourable friend the Minister of Finance (Hon. Mr. Galt) in favour of a union of all the British American Provinces, but, as the whole House

is familiar with it, I shall not read the document. But in the Votes and Proceedings of this House, of 25th April, 1856, I find a very remarkable document. It is a notice of motion to be made in this House, and its contents are as follows:

“1. Resolved,— That the inconveniences arising from the Legislative Union between Upper and Lower Canada, render desirable the dissolution of that Union.

“6. Resolved,—That a committee be appointed to inquire into the means which should be adopted to form a new political and legislative organization of the heretofore provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, either by the establishment of their former territorial divisions, or by a division of each province so as to form a confederation having a federal government and a local legislature for each one of the new provinces, and to deliberate as to the course which should be adopted to regulate the affairs of united Canada in a manner which would be equitable to the different sections of the province.”

HON. MR. CARTIER: Whose notice was that?

HON. MR. BROWN: This notice of motion was given by my honourable friend the member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. Dorion).

HON. MR. DORION: It was in amendment of that of the honourable member for Sherbrooke, which I did not exactly like.

HON. MR. HOLTON: And which that honourable gentleman did not venture to move, so that the House did not pronounce upon it.

HON. MR. BROWN: But my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Dorion) made a speech which I perfectly remember. He held this motion in his hand while he spoke.

HON. MR. DORION: I made a speech on the motion of the honourable member for Haldimand, Mr. Mackenzie, not on my own.

HON. MR. BROWN: That does not signify. I seek not to fasten down my honourable friend to the views he then held. Much light has been thrown on the whole subject since 1856, and I trust we will all act on our conscientious convictions of what is best for the country now, without regard to any opinions we may at other times have held. But when my honourable friend and others allege that there never has been in Canada an agitation in favour of a federal system, and that the people have never considered such a proposition, I think it directly in point to prove the contrary by my honourable friend's own proceedings.

The next step in the constitutional agitation of the country was the formation of the Brown-Dorion administration. That was in 1858; and to show how serious my honourable friend opposite (Hon. Mr. Dorion) and myself and our ten colleagues viewed the position of the country from the denial of constitutional reform, I will read the official statement of the basis on which the government was formed. I read from the Journals of the Legislative Council for 1858:

“For some years past, sectional feelings have risen in this country, which, especially during the present session, have seriously impeded the carrying on of the administrative and legislative functions of the government. The late administration made no attempt to meet these difficulties or to suggest a remedy for them, and thereby the evil has been greatly aggravated. His Excellency's present advisers have entered the government with the fixed determination to propose constitutional measures for the establishment of that harmony between Upper and Lower Canada which is essential to the prosperity of the province. They respectfully submit that they have a right to claim all the support which His Excellency can constitutionally extend to them in the prosecution of this all-important object.”

Here was a government formed seven years ago for the express purpose of doing that which we are now engaged in—a government distinctly telling the Governor-General that the peace and prosperity of the country were endangered because constitutional remedies were deferred; and yet my honourable friends opposite, who with me were responsible for that document, tell us that we are not now in a fit position to legislate upon this question.

But I come next to the famous despatch to the Colonial Minister, signed in 1858 by my honourable friend the Minister of Finance, the Attorney-General (east), and the Hon. John Ross. It stated that “very grave difficulties now present themselves in conducting the government of Canada;” that “the progress of population has been more rapid in the western section, and claims are now made on behalf of its inhabitants for giving them representation in the legislature in proportion to their numbers;” that “the result is shown by an agitation fraught with great danger to the peaceful and harmonious working of our constitutional system, and, consequently, detrimental to the progress of the province;” that “this state of things is yearly becoming worse;” and that “the Canadian government were impressed with the necessity of seeking for such a mode of dealing with those difficulties as may for ever remove them.” What must have been the state of public feeling when the conservative government of 1858 ventured to use such language as this?—and how can any one pretend that the people do not comprehend this question, when seven years of agitation have passed since that document was penned?

I come now to a still more important document—one that goes into the details and the merits of just such a scheme as that before the House, I refer to the manifesto issued, in 1859, by the Lower Canada members of the liberal party in this House. It is very long, and I will only read from it a few extracts:

“Your committee are impressed with the conviction that whether we consider the present needs or the probable future condition of the country, the true, the statesmanlike solution is to be sought in the substitution of a purely federative for the present so-called legislative union; the former, it is believed, would enable us to escape all the evils, and to retain all the advantages, appertaining to the existing union....”

“The proposition to federalize the Canadian union is not new. On the contrary, it has been frequently mooted in parliament and in the press during the last few years. It was, no doubt, suggested by the example of the neighbouring states, where the admirable adaptation of the federal system to the government of an extensive territory, inhabited by people of divers origins, creeds, laws and customs, has been amply demonstrated; but shape and consistency were first imparted to it in 1856, when it was formally submitted to parliament by the Lower Canada opposition, as offering, in their judgment, the true corrective of the abuses generated under the present system....”

“By this division of power the general government would be relieved from those questions of a purely local and sectional character, which, under our present system, have led to much strife and ill-will....”

“The committee believe that it is clearly demonstrable that the direct cost of maintaining both the federal and local governments need not exceed that of our present system, while its enormous indirect cost would, in consequence of the additional checks on expenditure involved in the new system, and the more direct responsibility of public servants in the province to the people immediately affected by such expenditure, be entirely obviated....”

“The proposed system could in no way diminish the importance of the colony, or impair its credit, while it presents the advantage of being susceptible, without any disturbance of the federal economy, of such territorial extension as circumstances may hereafter render desirable.”

Now, who were the signers of the address?—on whose special responsibility was this manifesto sent forth to the world? Why, it was signed by my honourable friend opposite, Hon. A. A. Dorion, Hon. T. D. McGee, Hon. L. T. Drummond, and Hon. L. A. Dessaulles, four of the most able and most popular leaders of the Lower Canada liberal party—the party now virulently opposing the resolutions before the chair. So my honourable friend opposite (Hon. Mr. Dorion) not only agitated the country for constitutional changes, but insisted that it should take the shape of a federal union, because of the cheapness of that system and the facility it afforded for bringing within the federation the other British American Provinces; and yet, six years after the promulgation of this document, my honourable friend gets up and repudiates a federal union because of its frightful cost, and because it does bring within the federation the other British American Provinces!

MR. POWELL: Who wrote that document?

HON. MR. BROWN: I cannot exactly say who did the composition; but will not my honourable friend from Chateauguay (Hon. Mr. Holton) permit me to ask if his hand is not discoverable in it? If so, he well may be proud of it, for it is a masterly exposition.

HON. MR. HOLTON: Will my honourable friend accept it as an amendment to his scheme?

HON. MR. GALT: No; ours is better than that!

HON. MR. BROWN: I come now to the great meeting of the reformers of Upper Canada, known as the Toronto convention of 1859, and at which 570 delegates were present from all parts of the western province. Here are the two chief resolutions:

“5. Resolved,—That in the opinion of this assembly, the best practicable remedy for the evils now encountered in the government of Canada is to be found in the formation of two or more local governments, to which shall be committed the control of all matters of a local or sectional character, and some joint authority charged with such matters as are necessarily common to both sections of the province.

6. Resolved,—That while the details of the changes proposed in the last resolution are necessarily subject for future arrangement, yet this assembly deems it imperative to declare that no government would be satisfactory to the people of Upper Canada which is not based on the principle of representation by population.”

Here we have the very essence of the measure now before us for adoption—deliberately approved of by the largest body of representative men ever assembled in Upper Canada for a political purpose; and yet we are to be told that our people do not understand the question, and we must go to them and explain it, letter by letter, at an immense cost to the country, and at the risk of losing the whole scheme? But let us see what followed. A general election was ordered in 1861—there was a fierce contest at the polls—and the main question at every hustings was the demand for constitutional changes. The result of that contest was the overthrow of the Cartier-Macdonald ministry and the formation of the Macdonald-Sicotte administration in its room. But so bitter had been the struggle for and against constitutional changes, and so clearly defined were party lines upon it, that it was found impossible to construct that government without a distinct pledge that it would resist every motion made upon the subject.

HON. MR. BOLTON: Did you recognize the propriety of that course?

HON. MR. BROWN: No, indeed, I did not. I but cite the fact to show how thoroughly the whole question has been agitated, and how perfectly its bearings have, for years past, been understood. Well, mark what followed. One short year had not passed over the heads of the Macdonald-Sicotte ministry before they tottered to their fall; and so repugnant to the House and to the country was their conduct on the constitutional question, that they dared not appeal to the country until they had changed their avowed policy upon it, and replaced the men who had forced upon them the narrow policy of the year before, by gentlemen

understood to be more in favour of constitutional changes. The government (Macdonald-Dorion), so reconstructed, went to the country in 1863, but in the year following, it too fell in its turn, simply because it did not deal boldly with the constitutional question.

HON. MR. DORION: We had the support of all who were in favour of the question.

HON. MR. BROWN: Indeed, you had not.

HON. MR. HOLTON: We should have fallen if we had attempted to deal with it.

HON. MR. BROWN: I entirely deny that; had you pursued a bold policy upon it you might have been in office up to this hour. Well, the Macdonald-Dorion made away for the Taché-Macdonald administration, but it too soon fell by a majority of two, simply because it did not deal with the constitutional question.

A VOICE: Oh, oh!

HON. MR. BROWN: My honourable friend cries “Oh, oh,” and I am perfectly amazed at his doing so.

“*Never, I venture to assert, was any great measure so thoroughly understood, and so cordially endorsed by the people of Canada, as this measure now under consideration.*”

I am about to offer my honourable friend the most complete proof of the correctness of my statement—proof so conclusive that if he does not accept of it as such, I do not know how he can be convinced of anything. In one single day the Taché-Macdonald administration, by taking up the constitutional question boldly, turned their minority of two into a majority of seventy. Could anything prove more unanswerably than this the deep hold this question has on the public mind, and the assured confidence of the members of this House that their constituents understand its whole merits, when, in one day, such a startling political revolution was brought about? Was it, think you, a doubtful consideration that could have induced the Upper Canada opposition, almost as one man, to cast down their party intrenchments and make common cause with their opponents? Could there have been the slightest doubt as to the sentiments of our people and the imperative necessity of immediate action, when such men as now sit on the treasury benches were forced, by their supporters, to unite for the settlement of this question? And could there be a more conclusive proof of the ripeness of public opinion than the unanimous and cordial manner in which our so uniting has been sustained by the press of all parties, and by the electors at the polls?

Never, I venture to assert, was any great measure so thoroughly understood, and so cordially endorsed by the people of Canada, as this measure now under consideration. The British government approves of it, the legislative council approves of it, this House almost unanimously approves of it, the press of all parties approves of it; and though the scheme has already been directly submitted to fifty out of the one hundred constituencies into which Canada is divided, only four candidates ventured to appear at the hustings in opposition to it—all of them in Lower Canada—and but two of them were elected.

And yet we are to be told that we are stealing a march upon the country; that it is not understood by the people; and that we must dissolve the House upon it, at a vast cost to the exchequer, and at the risk of allowing political partisanship to dash the fruit from our hands at the very moment we are about to grasp it! I have no fears whatever of an appeal to the people. I cannot pretend to speak as to the popular feeling in Lower Canada, but I think I thoroughly understand the popular mind of the western province, and I

hesitate not to say that there are not five gentlemen in this chamber (if so many) who could go before their constituents in Upper Canada in opposition to this scheme, with the slightest chance of being returned. It is because I thoroughly comprehend the feelings of the people upon it, that I urge the adoption of this measure at the earliest possible moment. The most gross injustice is to be rectified by it; the tax-payer is to be clothed with his rightful influence by it; new commercial relations are to be opened up by it; a new impulse to the industrial pursuits of the country will be given by it; and I for one would feel myself false to the cause I have so long sustained, and false to the best interests of my constituents, if I permitted one hour unnecessarily to pass without bringing it to a final issue.

It was only by the concurrence of most propitious circumstances that the wonderful progress this movement has made could have been accomplished. Most peculiar were the circumstances that enabled such a coalition to be formed as that now existing for the settlement of this question; and who shall say at what hour it may not be rent asunder? And yet, who will venture to affirm that if party spirit in all its fierceness were once more to be let loose amongst us, there would be the slightest hope that this great question could be approached with that candour and harmony necessary to its satisfactory solution?

Then, at the very moment we resolved to deal with this question of constitutional change, the Maritime Provinces were about to assemble joint conference to consider whether they ought not to form a union among themselves; and the way was thus most propitiously opened up for the consideration of a union of all British America. The civil war too in the neighbouring republic; the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States; the threatened repeal of the reciprocity treaty; the threatened abolition of the American bonding system for goods in transit to and from these provinces; the unsettled position of the Hudson's Bay Company; and the changed feeling of England as to the relations of great colonies to the parent state; all combine at this moment to arrest earnest attention to the gravity of the situation, and unite us all in one vigorous effort to meet the emergency like men.

The interests to be affected by this scheme of union are very large and varied; but the pressure of circumstances upon all the colonies is so serious at this moment, that if we cannot now banish partisanship and sectionalism and petty objections, and look at the matter on its broad intrinsic merits, what hope is there of our ever being able to do so? An appeal to the people of Canada on this measure simply means postponement of the question for a year; and who can tell how changed ere then may be the circumstances surrounding us? The man who strives for the postponement of this measure on any ground, is doing what he can to kill it almost as effectually as if he voted against it.

Let there be no mistake as to the manner in which the government presents this measure to the House. We do not present it as free from fault, but we do present it as a measure so advantageous to the people of Canada, that all the blemishes, real or imaginary, averred against it, sink into utter insignificance in presence of its merits. We present it, not in the precise shape we in Canada would desire it, but as in the best shape the five colonies to be united could agree upon it. We present it in the form in which the five governments have severally adopted it—in the form the Imperial government has endorsed it—and in the form in which we believe all the legislatures of the provinces will accept it. We ask the House to pass it in the exact form in which we have presented it, for we know not how alterations may affect its safety in other places; and the process of alteration once commenced in four different legislatures, who could tell where that would end? Every member of this House is free as air to criticise it if he so wills, and amend it if he is able; but we warn him of the danger of amendment, and throw on him all responsibility of the consequences. We feel confident of carrying this scheme as it stands, but we cannot tell what we can do if it be amended.

Let not honourable gentlemen approach this measure as a sharp critic deals with an abstract question, striving to point out blemishes and display his ingenuity; but let us approach it as men having but one consideration before us—the establishment of the future peace and prosperity of our country. Let us look at it in the light of a few months back—in the light of the evils and injustice to which it applies a remedy—in the light of the years of discord and strife we have spent in seeking for that remedy—in the light with which the

people of Canada would regard this measure were it to be lost, and all the evils of past years to be brought back upon us again.

Let honourable gentlemen look at the question in this view, and what one of them will take the responsibility of casting his vote against the measure? The future destiny of these great provinces may be affected by the decision we are about to give to an extent which at this moment we may be unable to estimate, but assuredly the welfare for many years of four millions of people hangs on our decision.

“*Shall we then rise equal to the occasion?—shall we approach this discussion without partisanship, and free from every personal feeling but the earnest resolution to discharge conscientiously the duty which an overruling Providence has placed upon us?*”

Shall we then rise equal to the occasion?—shall we approach this discussion without partisanship, and free from every personal feeling but the earnest resolution to discharge conscientiously the duty which an overruling Providence has placed upon us?

It may be that some among us will live to see the day when, as the result of this measure, a great and powerful people may have grown up on these lands—when the boundless forests all around us shall have given way to smiling fields and thriving towns—and when one united government, under the British flag, shall extend from shore to shore; but who would desire to see that day, if he could not recall with satisfaction the part he took in this discussion?

I have done. I leave the subject to the conscientious judgment of the House, in the confident expectation and belief that the decision it will render will be worthy of the parliament of Canada.



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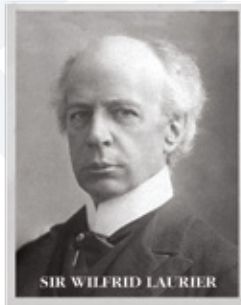
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