



FEBRUARY 2017

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, SPEECH IN THE CONFEDERATION DEBATES

—February 9, 1865

Thomas D'Arcy McGee's speech in the Confederation Debates developed the idea of Canada, and the meaning of Canada's New Nationality, a phrase he may have himself coined. "What really keeps nations intact and apart?" McGee asked. "A principle. When I can hear our young men say as proudly, 'our Federation' or 'our Country,' or 'our Kingdom,' as the young men of other countries do, speaking of their own, then I shall have less apprehension for the result of whatever trial the future may have in store for us." McGee argues that Canada has had "three warnings"—from Britain, to prepare for a more self-reliant future, from the United States, gripped by the Civil War and threat to Canada's frontiers, and finally, a warning from within—Canada itself becoming increasingly ungovernable due to the sectional conflict between Upper and Lower Canada. McGee argues that federalism will unite Canadians, and promote liberty and stability by uniting broader interests within a larger Canada. "There is something in the frequent, fond recurrence of mankind to this principle," said McGee, "among the freest people, in their best times and worst dangers, which leads me to believe that it has a very deep hold in human nature itself." McGee's principle message to Canadians today is the connection of federalism, freedom and the deep reservoirs of moderation inherent in Canadian unity, recalling his famous aphorism, "Unity is to Liberty, as the cistern in the desert is to the seldom-sent shower."

The HONORABLE MR. MCGEE said—Mr. SPEAKER, I rise to endeavor to fulfil the promise made in my name last evening by the Lower Canadian leader of this House.

After the four speeches that have already been delivered from this quarter of the House, it may very well be supposed that little of essential importance remains to be said. On Monday the Attorney General West, in exposing the case for the Government, in moving this Address to Her Majesty, went very fully through all the items of the resolutions agreed upon at the Quebec Conference, and gave us a full analysis of the whole project with his own constitutional commentaries upon the proceedings of that body. On the next

evening, the Attorney General East gave us his views also, treating chiefly of the difficulties in Lower Canada. The same night, my hon. friend, the Minister of Finance, gave us a financial view of the whole subject; and last evening the Hon. President of the Council gave us another extended financial and political address, with some arguments from “the Upper Canadian point of view,” as the phrase is. It may well therefore seem that after these speeches little of essential importance remains to be stated.

Still this subject is so vast, the project before the House is so vast, and comprehends within it so many objects of interest, the atmosphere that surrounds a subject of this importance is so subtle and fluctuating, that there may be, I am feign to believe, a little joiner-work still left to do—there may be a hiatus here and there to fill up; and although, as far as what is called “the preliminary case” is concerned, the question might perhaps very well have rested with the four speeches already delivered—there may be some slight additional contribution made, and, such as it is, in my own humble way, I propose to make it to-night. (Hear, hear.)

““ *This subject is so vast, the project before the House is so vast, and comprehends within it so many objects of interest, the atmosphere that surrounds a subject of this importance is so subtle and fluctuating.*”

We all remember that in the nursery legend of the Three Kings of Cologne, CASPAR brought myrrh, and MELCHIOR incense, and BALTASSAR gold, but I am afraid my contribution will be less valuable than any of these, yet such as it is I cheerfully bring it, particularly when there are so many in this and the other provinces who would like to know what my own views are in relation to the present crisis. (Hear.)

With your approbation, sir, and the forbearance of the House, I will endeavour to treat this subject in this way:—First, to give some slight sketch of the history of the question; then to examine the existing motives which ought to prompt us to secure a speedy union of these provinces; then to speak of the difficulties which this question has encountered before reaching its present fortunate stage; then to say something of the mutual advantages, in a social rather than political point of view, which these provinces will have in their union, and lastly to add a few words on the Federal principle in general, when I shall have done. In other words, I propose to consider the question of union mainly from within, and as far as possible to avoid going over the ground already so fully and so much better occupied by hon. friends who have already spoken upon the subject.

My hon. friend, the member for Hochelaga, thought he did a very clever thing the other evening when he disentombed an old newspaper article of mine, entitled “A New Nationality,” and endeavored to fix on me the paternity of the phrase—destined to become prophetic—which was employed by a very distinguished personage in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the session. I do happen to remember the article alluded to as one of my first essays in political writing in Canada; but I am quite sure that the almost forgotten publication in which it appeared was never known, even by name, to the illustrious person who delivered the speech on that occasion. But I will own when I saw my bantling held up to the admiration of the House in the delicate and fostering hands of the hon. member for Hochelaga, I was not ashamed of it; on the contrary, perhaps there was some tingling of parental pride when I saw what ten years ago I pointed out as the true position for these colonies to take, about to be adopted by all the colonies under such favorable circumstances.

I do not think it ought to be made a matter of reproach to me, or a cause for belittling the importance of the subject, that ten years ago I used the identical phrase employed in the Speech from the Throne. The

idea itself is a good one, and it may have floated through the minds of many men and received intellectual hospitality even from the honourable member for Hochelaga himself. One is reminded by this sort of thing, of Puff in the Critic. “Two people happened to hit upon the same thought, and SHAKESPEARE made use of it first—that’s all.” (Laughter.) My honorable friend is in this respect, no doubt, the SHAKESPEARE of the new nationality. (Renewed laughter.) If there is anything in the article he has read to the House which is deserving of disapprobation, he is *particeps criminis*, and equally blameable if not more blameable than myself. He is indeed the older sinner, and I bow to him in that character with all proper humility. (Renewed laughter.)

Really, Mr. SPEAKER, the attempt to fix the parentage of this child of many fathers is altogether absurd and futile. It is almost as ridiculous as the attempt to fix the name of this new Confederation, in advance of the decision of the Gracious Lady to whom the matter is to be referred. I have read in one newspaper published in a western city not less than a dozen attempts of this nature. One individual chooses Tuponia and another Hochelaga, as a suitable name for the new nationality. Now I would ask any hon. member of this House how he would feel if he woke up some fine morning and found himself, instead of a Canadian, a Tuponian or Hochelagander. (Laughter.)

“When the Confederation has a place among the nations of the world, and opens a new page in history, it will be time enough to look into its antecedents.”

I think, sir, we may safely leave for the present the discussion of the name as well as the origin of the new system proposed; when the Confederation has a place among the nations of the world, and opens a new page in history, it will be time enough to look into its antecedents, and when it has reached this stage there are a few men who, having struggled for it in its earlier difficulties, will then deserve to be honorably mentioned. I shall not be guilty of the bad taste of complimenting those with whom I have the honor to be associated; but when we reach the stage of research, which lies far beyond the stage of deliberation in these affairs, there are some names that ought not to be forgotten. (Hear, hear.) So far back as the year 1800, the Honorable Mr. UNIACKE, a leading politician in Nova Scotia at that date, submitted a scheme of Colonial Union to the Imperial authorities. In 1815, Chief Justice SEWELL, whose name will be well remembered as a leading lawyer of this city and a farsighted politician, submitted a scheme. In 1822, Sir JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON, at the request of the Colonial Office, submitted a project of the same kind; and I need not refer to the report of Lord DURHAM on Colonial Union in 1839. These are all memorable, and some of them are great names.

“If we have dreamed a dream of union ... it is at least worth while remarking that a dream which has been dreamed by such wise and good men.”

If we have dreamed a dream of union (as some hon. gentlemen say), it is at least worth while remarking that a dream which has been dreamed by such wise and good men, may, for aught we know or you know, have been a sort of vision—a vision foreshadowing forthcoming natural events in a clear intelligence. A vision (I say it without irreverence, for the event concerns the lives of millions living, and yet to come) resembling

those seen by the DANIELS and JOSEPHS of old, foreshadowing the trials of the future; the fate of tribes and peoples; the rise and fall of dynasties. But the immediate history of the measure is sufficiently wonderful without dwelling on the remoter predictions of so many wise men.

Whoever, in 1862, or even in 1863, would have told us that we should see, even what we see in these seats by which I stand—such a representation of interests acting together, would be accounted, as our Scotch friends say, “half-daft”;—and whoever, in the Lower Provinces about the same time, would have ventured to foretell the composition of their delegations, which sat with us under this roof last October, would probably have been considered equally demented. (Laughter.)

But the thing came about, and if those gentlemen, who have had no immediate hand in bringing it about, and therefore naturally felt less interest in the project than we who did, will only give us the benefit of the doubt, will only assume that we are not all altogether wrong-headed, we hope to show them still farther, as we think we have already shown them, that we are by no means without reason in entering on this enterprise. I submit, however, we may very well dismiss the antecedent history of the question for the present: it grew from an unnoticed feeble plant, to be a stately and flourishing tree, and for my part any one that pleases may say he made the tree grow, if I can only have hereafter my fair share of the shelter and the shade. (Cheers.)

But in the present stage of the question, the first real stage of its success—the thing that gave importance to theory in men’s minds—was the now celebrated despatch, signed by two members of this Government and an hon. gentleman formerly their colleague, a member of the other House; I refer to the despatch of 1858. The recommendations in that despatch lay dormant until revived by the Constitutional Committee of last Session, which led to the Coalition, which led to the Quebec Conference, which led to the draft of the Constitution now on our table, which will lead, I am fain to believe, to the union of all these provinces. (Hear, hear.)

At the same time that we mention the distinguished politicians, I think we ought not to forget those zealous and laborious contributors to the public press, who, although not associated with governments, and not themselves at the time in politics, addressed the public mind, and greatly contributed to give life and interest to this question, and indirectly to bring it to the happy position in which it now stands. Of those gentlemen I will mention two. I do not know whether hon. gentlemen of this House have seen some letters on colonial union, written in 1855, the last addressed to the late Duke of NEWCASTLE, by Mr. P. S. HAMILTON, an able public writer of Nova Scotia, and the present Gold Commissioner of that province; but I take this opportunity of bearing my testimony to his well-balanced judgment, political sagacity and the skilful handling the subject received from him at a very early period. (Hear, hear.)

There is another little book written in English, six or seven years ago, to which I must refer. It is a pamphlet, which met with an extraordinary degree of success, entitled *Nova Britannia*, by my hon. friend the member for South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS); and as he has been one of the principal agents in bringing into existence the present Government, which is now carrying out the idea embodied in his book, I trust he will forgive me if I take the opportunity, although he is present, of reading a single sentence to show how far he was in advance and how true he was to the coming event, which we are now considering. At page 57 of his pamphlet—which I hope will be reprinted among the political miscellanies of the provinces when we are one country and one people—I find this paragraph:

The dealing with the destinies of a future Britannic empire, the shaping its course, the laying its foundations broad and deep, and the erecting thereon a noble and enduring superstructure, are indeed duties that may well evoke the energies of our people, and nerve the arms and give power and enthusiasm to the aspirations of all true patriots. The very magnitude of the interests involved, will, I doubt not, elevate many amongst us above the demands of mere sectionalism, and enable them to evince sufficient comprehensiveness of mind to deal in the

spirit of real statesmen with issues so momentous, and to originate and develop a national line of commercial and general policy, such as will prove adapted to the wants and exigencies of our position.

There are many other excellent passages in the work, but I will not detain the House with many quotations. The spirit that animates the whole will be seen from the extract I have read. But whatever the private writer in his closet may have conceived, whatever even the individual statesman may have designed, so long as the public mind was uninterested in the adoption, even in the discussion of a change in our position so momentous as this, the union of these separate provinces, the individual laboured in vain—perhaps sir, not wholly in vain, for although his work may not have borne fruit then, it was kindling a fire that would ultimately light up the whole political horizon, and herald the dawn of a better day for our country and our people. Events stronger than advocacy, events stronger than men, have come in at last like the fire behind the invisible writing to bring out the truth of these writings and to impress them upon the mind of every thoughtful man who has considered the position and probable future of these scattered provinces. (Cheers.)

“ *The private writer in his closet ... was kindling a fire that would ultimately light up the whole political horizon, and herald the dawn of a better day for our country and our people.* ”

Before I go further into the details of my subject, I will take this opportunity of congratulating this House and the public of all the provinces upon the extraordinary activity which has been given to this subject since it has become a leading topic of public discussion in the maritime, and what I may call relatively to them, the inland provinces. It is astonishing how active has been the public mind in all those communities since the subject has been fairly launched. I have watched with great attention the expression of public opinion in the Lower Provinces as well as in our own, and I am rejoiced to find that even in the smallest of the provinces I have been able to read writings and speeches which would do no discredit to older and more cultivated communities—articles and speeches worthy of any press and of any audience. The provincial mind, it would seem, under the inspiration of a great question, leaped at a single bound out of the slough of mere mercenary struggles for office, and took post on the high and honourable ground from which alone this great subject can be taken in in all its dimensions,—had risen at once to the true dignity of this discussion with an elasticity that does honor to the communities that have exhibited it, and gives assurance that we have the metal, the material, out of which to construct a new and vigorous nationality. (Cheers.)

“ *We have the metal, the material, out of which to construct a new and vigorous nationality.* ”

We find in the journals and in the speeches of public men in the Lower Provinces a discussion of the first principles of government, a discussion of the principles of constitutional law, and an intimate knowledge and close application of the leading facts in constitutional history, which gives to me at least the satisfaction

and assurance that, if we never went farther in this matter, we have put an end for the present, and I hope for long, to bitterer and smaller controversies.

We have given the people some sound mental food, and to every man who has a capacity for discussion we have given a topic upon which he can fitly exercise his powers, no longer gnawing at a file and wasting his abilities in the poor effort of advancing the ends of some paltry faction or party. I can congratulate this House and province and the provinces below, that such is the case, and I may observe, with some satisfaction, that the various authors and writers seem to be speaking or writing as if in the visible presence of all the colonies. (Hear, hear.) They are no longer hole-and-corner celebrities: they seem to think that their words will be scanned and weighed afar off as well as at home. We have, I believe, several hundred celebrities in Canada—my friend Mr. MORGAN, I believe, has made out a list of them—(laughter)—but they are no longer now local celebrities; if celebrities at all they must be celebrities for British North America; for every one of the speeches made by them on this subject is watched in all the provinces, and in point of fact by the mere appearance of political union, we have made a mental union among the people of all these provinces; and many men now speak with a dignity and carefulness which formerly did not characterize them, when they were watched only by their own narrow and struggling section, and weighed only according to a stunted local standard. (Hear, hear.) Federation, I hope, may supply to all our public men just ground for uniting in nobler and more profitable contests than those which have signalized the past. (Hear, hear.)

“*The motives to such a comprehensive change as we propose, must be mixed motives—partly commercial, partly military, and partly political.*”

We on this side, Mr. SPEAKER, propose for that better future our plan of union; and, if you will allow me, I shall go over what appear to me the principal motives which exist at present for that union. My hon. friend the Finance Minister mentioned the other evening several strong motives for union—free access to the sea, an extended market, breaking down of hostile tariffs, a more diversified field for labor and capital, our enhanced credit with England, and our greater effectiveness when united for assistance in time of danger. (Cheers.) The Hon. President of the Council also enumerated several motives for union in relation to the commercial advantages which will flow from it, and other powerful reasons which may be advanced in favor of it. But the motives to such a comprehensive change as we propose, must be mixed motives—partly commercial, partly military, and partly political; and I shall go over a few—not strained or simulated—motives which are entertained by many people of all these provinces, and are rather of a social, or, strictly speaking, political, than of a financial kind.

“*We cannot stand still; we cannot stave off some great change; we cannot stand alone, province apart from province, if we would; and that we are in a state of political transition.*”

In the first place, I echo what was stated in the speech last night of my honorable friend, the President of the Council—that we cannot stand still; we cannot stave off some great change; we cannot stand alone,

province apart from province, if we would; and that we are in a state of political transition. All, even honorable gentlemen who are opposed to this union, admit that we must do something, and that that something must not be a mere temporary expedient. We are compelled, by warning voices from within and without, to make a change, and a great change. We all, with one voice, who are unionists, declare our conviction that we can not go on as we have gone; but you, who are all anti-unionists, say—"Oh! that is begging the question; you have not yet proved that." Well, Mr. SPEAKER, what proofs do the gentlemen want? I presume there are three influences which determine any great change in the course of any individual or state. First—his patron, owner, employer, protector, ally, or friend; or, in politics, "Imperial connection." Secondly—his partner, comrade, or fellow-laborer, or near neighbor. And, thirdly,—the man himself, or the state itself.

Now, in our case, all three causes have concurred to warn and force us into a new course of conduct. What are these warnings? We have had at least three.

The first is from England, and is a friendly warning. England warned us by several matters of fact, according to her custom, rather than verbiage, that the colonies had entered upon a new era of existence, a new phase in their career. She has given us this warning in several different shapes—when she gave us "Responsible Government"—when she adopted Free Trade—when she repealed the Navigation laws—and when, three or four years ago, she commenced that series of official despatches in relation to militia and defence which she has ever since poured in on us, in a steady stream, always bearing the same solemn burthen—"prepare! prepare! prepare!" These warnings gave us notice that the old order of things between the colonies and the Mother Country had ceased, and that a new order must take its place. (Hear, hear.)

“*We were no longer to consider ourselves, in relation to defence, in the same position we formerly occupied towards the Mother Country.*”

About four years ago, the first despatches began to be addressed to this country, from the Colonial Office, upon the subject. From that day to this there has been a steady stream of despatches in this direction, either upon particular or general points connected with our defence; and I venture to say, that if bound up together, the despatches of the lamented Duke of NEWCASTLE alone would make a respectable volume—all notifying this Government, by the advices they conveyed, that the relations—the military apart from the political and commercial relations of this province to the Mother Country had changed; and we were told in the most explicit language that could be employed, that we were no longer to consider ourselves, in relation to defence, in the same position we formerly occupied towards the Mother Country.

Well, these warnings have been friendly warnings; and if we have failed to do our part in regard to them, we must, at all events, say this, that they were addressed to our Government so continuously and so strenuously that they freed the Imperial power of the responsibility for whatever might follow, because they showed to the colonies clearly what, in the event of certain contingencies arising, they had to expect. We may grumble or not at the necessity of preparation England imposes upon us, but, whether we like it or not, we have, at all events, been told that we have entered upon a new era in our military relations to the rest of the Empire. (Hear, hear.)

Then, sir, in the second place, there came what I may call the other warning from without—the American warning. (Hear, hear.) Republican America gave us her notices in times past, through her press, and her demagogues and her statesmen,—but of late days she has given us much more intelligible notices—such as

the notice to abrogate the Reciprocity Treaty, and to arm the lakes, contrary to the provisions of the addenda to the treaty of 1818. She has given us another notice in imposing a vexatious passport system; another in her avowed purpose to construct a ship canal round the Falls of Niagara, so as “to pass war vessels from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie”; and yet another, the most striking one of all, has been given to us, if we will only understand it, by the enormous expansion of the American army and navy. I will take leave to read to the House a few figures which show the amazing, the unprecedented growth, which has not, perhaps, a parallel in the annals of the past, of the military power of our neighbors within the past three or four years. I have the details here by me, but shall only read the results, to show the House the emphatic meaning of this most serious warning.

In January, 1861, the regular army of the United States, including of course the whole of the States, did not exceed 15,000 men. This number was reduced, from desertion and other causes, by 5,000 men, leaving 10,000 men as the army of the States. In December, 1862—that is, from January, 1861, to January, 1863, this army of 10,000 was increased to 800,000 soldiers actually in the field. (Hear, hear.) No doubt there are exaggerations in some of these figures—the rosters were, doubtless, in some cases filled with fictitious names, in order to procure the bounties that were offered; but if we allow two-thirds as correct, we find that a people who had an army of 10,000 men in 1861, had in two years increased it to an army of 600,000 men. As to their ammunition and stock of war material at the opening of the war—that is to say, at the date of the attack upon Fort Sumpter—we find that they had of siege and heavy guns 1,952; of field artillery, 231; of infantry firearms, 473,000; of cavalry firearms, 31,000; and of ball and shell, 363,000. At the end of 1863—the latest period to which I have statistics upon the subject—the 1,052 heavy guns had become 2,116; the 231 field pieces had become 2,965; the 473,000 infantry arms had become 2,423,000; the 31,000 cavalry arms had become 369,000, and the 363,000 ball and shell had become 2,925,000. Now, as to the navy of the United States, I wish to show that this wonderful development of war power in the United States is the second warning we have had, that we cannot go on as we have gone. (Hear, hear.) In January, 1861, the ships of war belonging to the United States were 83; in December, 1864, they numbered 671, of which 54 were monitors and iron-clads, carrying 4,610 guns, with a tonnage of 510,000 tons, and manned by a force of 51,000 men.

These are frightful figures for the capacity of destruction they represent, for the heaps of carnage that they represent, for the quantity of human blood spilt that they represent, for the lust of conquest that they represent, for the evil passions that they represent, and for the arrest of the onward progress of civilization that they represent. But it is not the figures which give the worst view of the fact—for England still carries more guns afloat even than our war-making neighbors. (Cheers.) It is the change which has taken place in the spirit of the people of the Northern States themselves which is the worst view of the fact. How far have they travelled since the humane CHANNING preached the unlawfulness of war—since the living SUMNER delivered his addresses to the Peace Society on the same theme! I remember an accomplished poet, one of the most accomplished the New England States have ever produced, took very strong grounds against the prosecution of the Mexican war, and published the Bigelow Papers, so well known in American literature, to show the ferocity and criminality of war. He thus made Mr. BIRD-OF-FREEDOM SAWIN sing:

*Ef you take a soaord an' draor it,
An go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment won't answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you!*

(Laughter.) This was slightly audacious and irreverent in expression, but it was remarkably popular in New England at that time. The writer is now one of the editors of a popular Boston periodical, and would be one of the last, I have no doubt, to induce a Northern soldier to withdraw his sword from the body of any unhappy Southerner whom he had, contrary to the poet's former political ethics, “stuck thru.” (Laughter.) But it is not the revolution wrought in the minds of men of great intelligence that is most to be deplored—for the powerful will of such men may compel their thoughts back again to a philosophy of peace; no, it is

the mercenary and military interests created under Mr. LINCOLN—which are represented, the former by an estimated governmental outlay of above \$100,000,000 this year, and the other by the 800,000 men whose blood is thus to be bought and paid for; by the armies out of uniform who prey upon the army; by the army of contractors who arc to feed and clothe and arm the million; by that other army, the army of tax-collectors, who cover the land, seeing that no industry escapes unburthened, no possession unentered, no affection even, untaxed. Tax! tax! tax! is the cry from the rear! Blood! blood! blood! is the cry from the front ! Gold! gold! gold! is the chuckling undertone which comes up from the mushroom millionaires, well named a shoddy aristocracy.

Nor do I think the army interest, the contracting interest, and the tax gathering interest, the worst results that have grown out of this war. There is another and equally serious interest—the change that has come over the spirit, mind and principles of the people, that terrible change which has made war familiar and even attractive to them. When the first battle was fought—when, in the language of the Duke of WELINGTON, the first “butcher’s bill was sent in”—a shudder of horror ran through the length and breadth of the country; but by and by as the carnage increased, no newspaper was considered worth laying on the breakfast table unless it contained the story of the butchery of thousands of men. “Only a couple of thousand killed! Pooh, pooh, that’s nothing!” exclaimed Mr. SHODDY as he sipped his coffee in his luxurious apartment; and nothing short of the news of ten, fifteen, twenty thousand human beings struck dead in one day would satisfy the jaded palate of men craving for excitement, and such horrible excitement as attended the wholesale murder of their fellow creatures.

““ *When the three cries among our next neighbors are money, taxation, blood, it is time for us to provide for our own security.*”

Have these sights and sounds no warning addressed to us? Are we as those who have eyes and see not; ears and hear not; reason, neither do they understand? If we are true to Canada—if we do not desire to become part and parcel of this people—we cannot overlook this the greatest revolution of our own times. Let us remember this, that when the three cries among our next neighbors are money, taxation, blood, it is time for us to provide for our own security. I said in this House, during the session of the year 1861, that the first gun fired at Fort Sumpter had “a message for us”; I was unheeded then; I repeat now that every one of the 2,700 great guns in the field, and every one of the 4,600 guns afloat, whenever it opens its mouth, repeats the solemn warning of England—prepare—prepare—prepare! (Cheers.)

But I may be told by some moralizing friend, Oh! but when they get out of this, they will have had enough of it, and they will be very glad to rest on their laurels. They! Who? The shoddy aristocracy have enough of it? The disbanded army of tax-gathers have enough [of] it? The manufacturers of false intelligence have enough of it? Who is it possible will have had enough of it? The fighting men themselves? I dare say they would all like to have a furlough, but all experiences teach us, it is not of war soldiers tire but of peace; it is not of the sea sailors tire, but of the land. Jack likes to land, and have a frolic and spend his money, so does Jack’s brother the fighting landsman—but the one is soon as much out of his element as the other, when parted from his comrades; when denied the gypsy joys of the camp, when he no longer feels his sword, he looks up to it where it hangs, and sighs to take it down and be “at work” again. He will even quit his native country, if she continues perversely peaceful, and go into foreign service, rather than remain what he calls “idle.” (Hear.) This is experience, which I beg respectfully to cite in opposition to the seductive, disarming fallacy of my moralizing friend. (Hear, hear.)

The Attorney General East told us in his speech the other night, that one of the features of the original programme of the American Revolutionists was the acquisition of Canada to the United States. They pretend to underrate the importance of this country, now that they are fully occupied elsewhere; but I remember well that the late Mr. WEBSTER—who was not a demagogue—at the opening of the Worcester and Albany Railway, some years since, expressed the hope that the railways of the New England States would all point towards Canada, because their influence and the demands of commerce would in time bring Canada into the union and increase the New England element in that union. (Hear, hear.)

I think, sir, I am justified in regarding the American conflict as one of the warnings we have received; and the third warning, that things cannot go on in this country as they are, is a warning voice from within—a warning voice from our own experience in the government of these provinces. (Hear, hear.) On these internal constitutional difficulties existing among ourselves, which were so fully exposed last evening by my hon. friend the President of the Council, I need say little; they are admitted to have been real, not imaginary, on all hands. An illustration was used in another place in explaining this part of the subject by the venerable and gallant knight, our Premier, than which nothing could be more clear. He observed that when we had had five administrations within two years, it was full time to look out for some permanent remedy for such a state of things. True—most true—Constitutional Government among us had touched its lowest point when it existed only by the successful search of a messenger or a page, after a member, willingly or unwillingly absent from his seat. Any one might in those days have been the saviour of his country. (Laughter.) All he had to do was, when one of the five successive governments which arose in two years, was in danger, to rise in his place, say “yea!” and presto the country was saved. (Laughter.) This House was fast losing, under such a state of things its hold on the country; the administrative departments were becoming disorganized under such frequent changes of chiefs and policies; we were nearly as bad as the army of the Potomac, before its “permanent remedy” was found in General GRANT.

Well! we have had our three warnings. One warning from within and two from without. I dare say, sir, we all remember the old class-book story of Mrs. THRALE’S “Three Warnings”; how Death promised not to come after a certain individual he had unintentionally intruded on, on his wedding day. I say, unintentionally—for Death is a gentleman, and seldom walks in, unannounced—(laughter)—but he promised not to call upon this particular person, without giving him three distinct warnings. Well, the honorable gentleman in question—I dare say he was honorable, and a member of some House,—he, like all the rest of us expected to outlive everybody. But in process of years he fell lame, then afterwards, he became deaf, and at last he grew blind: then Death’s hour had come and in spite of some admirable pleading on behalf of the defendant in the case, he had his “three warnings” like a Parisian editor, his case was closed, his form was locked up, and his impression was struck off the face of the earth, and Death claimed and had his own. (Laughter.)

Now, sir, we have had three warnings, and if we do not take heed of them and prepare for the possible future condition into which we may be plunged, woe to us if we are found unprepared when the hour of destiny strikes! (Cheers.)

We have submitted a plan preparing us for such a contingency, and the Attorneys General East and West have analysed its constitutional character, while the Minister of Finance and the President of the Council have treated it in its financial aspects. There are some objections taken to the plan, I understand, but I do not believe that any member will get up in this House, and declare that he is an anti-unionist, that he is opposed to all union, and that he considers union unnecessary and inexpedient. (Hear, hear.) I do not know that there is one man out of the one hundred and thirty who compose this House, in view of the circumstances in which we are placed, who will declare that he is opposed to any sort of union with the Lower Provinces. One may say that he does not like this or the other clause—that he does not like this or that feature of the proposed scheme; but still all admit that union of some kind would increase our protection and be a source of strength. Some honorable gentlemen, while admitting that we have entered, within the present decade, on a period of political transition, have contended that we might have bridged the abyss

with that Prussian pontoon, called a Zollverein. But if any one for a moment will remember that the trade of the whole front of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia gravitates at present along-shore to Portland and Boston, while the trade of Upper Canada, west of Kingston, has long gravitated across the lakes to New York, he will see, I think, that a mere Zollverein treaty without a strong political end to serve, and some political power at its back, would be, in our new circumstances, merely waste paper. (Hear, hear.)

“ I do not know that there is one man out of the one hundred and thirty who compose this House ... who will declare that he is opposed to any sort of union with the Lower Provinces.”

The charge that we have not gone far enough—that we have not struck out boldly for a consolidated union, instead of a union with reserved local jurisdictions, is another charge which deserves some notice. To this I answer that, if we had had, as was proposed, an Intercolonial Railway twenty years ago, we might by this time have been, perhaps, and only perhaps, in a condition to unite into one consolidated Government; but certain politicians and capitalists having defeated that project twenty years ago, special interests took the place great general interests might by this time have occupied; vested rights and local ambitions arose and were recognized; and all these had to be admitted as existing in a pretty advanced stage of development, when our Conferences were called together. (Hear, hear.)

“ The acquisition of Canada was the first ambition of the American Confederacy, and never ceased to be so, when her troops were a handful and her navy scarce a squadron.”

The lesson to be learned from this squandering of quarter centuries by British Americans is this, that if we lose the present propitious opportunity, we may find it as hard a few years hence to get an audience, even for any kind of union (except American union) as we should have found it to get a hearing last year for a Legislative union, from the long period of estrangement and non-intercourse which had existed between these provinces, and the special interests which had grown up in the meantime in each of them. (Cheers.)

Another motive to union, or rather a phase of the last motive spoken of, is this, that the policy of our neighbors to the south of us has always been aggressive. There has always been a desire amongst them for the acquisition of new territory, and the inexorable law of democratic existence seems to be its absorption. They coveted Florida, and seized it; they coveted Louisiana, and purchased it; they coveted Texas, and stole it; and then they picked a quarrel with Mexico, which ended by their getting California. (Hear, hear.) They sometimes pretend to despise these colonies as prizes beneath their ambition; but had we not had the strong arm of England over us, we should not now have had a separate existence. (Cheers.) The acquisition of Canada was the first ambition of the American Confederacy, and never ceased to be so, when her troops were

a handful and her navy scarce a squadron. Is it likely to be stopped now, when she counts her guns afloat by thousands and her troops by hundreds of thousands?

On this motive, a very powerful expression of opinion has lately appeared in a published letter of the Archbishop of Halifax, Dr. CONNOLLY. Who is the Archbishop of Halifax? In either of the coast colonies, where he has labored in his high vocation for nearly a third of a century, it would be absurd to ask the question; but in Canada he may not be equally well known. Some of my honorable friends in this and the other House, who were his guests last year, must have felt the impress of his character as well as the warmth of his hospitality. (Hear, hear.) Well, he is known as one of the first men in sagacity as he is in position, in any of these colonies; that he was for many years the intimate associate of his late distinguished confrere, Archbishop HUGHES, of New York; that he knows the United States as thoroughly as he does the provinces, and these are his views on this particular point; the extract is somewhat long, but so excellently put that I am sure the House will be obliged to me for the whole of it:

Instead of cursing, like the boy in the upturned boat, and holding on until we are fairly on the brink of the cataract, we must at once begin to pray and strike out for the shore by all means, before we get too far down on the current. We must at this most critical moment invoke the Arbiter of nations for wisdom, and abandoning in time our perilous position, we must strike out boldly, and at some risk, for some rock on the nearest shore—some resting place of greater security. A cavalry raid or a visit from our Fenian friends on horseback, through the plains of Canada and the fertile valleys of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, may cost more in a single week than Confederation for the next fifty years; and if we are to believe you, where is the security even at the present moment against such a disaster? Without the whole power of the Mother Country by land and sea, and the concentration in a single hand of all the strength of British America, our condition is seen at a glance. Whenever the present difficulties will terminate—and who can tell the moment?—we will be at the mercy of our neighbors; and victorious or otherwise, they will be eminently a military people, and with all their apparent indifference about annexing this country, and all the friendly feelings that may be talked, they will have the power to strike when they please, and this is precisely the kernel and the only touch point of the whole question. No nation ever had the power of conquest that did not use it, or abuse it, at the very first favorable opportunity. All that is said of the magnanimity and forbearance of mighty nations can be explained on the principle of sheer inexpediency, as the world knows. The whole face of Europe has been changed, and the dynasties of many hundred years have been swept away within our own time, on the principle of might alone—the oldest, the strongest, and as some would have it, the most sacred of all titles. The thirteen original states of America, with all their professions of self-denial, have been all the time, by money, power and by war, and by negotiation, extending their frontier until they more than quadrupled their territory within sixty years; and believe it who may, are they now of their own accord to come to a full stop? No; as long as they have the power, they must go onward: for it is the very nature of power to grip whatever is within its reach. It is not their hostile feelings, therefore, but it is their power, and only their power, I dread; and I now state it, as my solemn conviction, that it becomes the duty of every British subject in these provinces to control that power, not by the insane policy of attacking or weakening them, but by strengthening ourselves—rising, with the whole power of Britain at our back, to their level; and so be prepared for any emergency. There is no sensible or unprejudiced man in the community who does not see that vigorous and timely preparation is the only possible means of saving us from the horrors of a war such as the world has never seen. To be fully prepared is the only practical argument that can have weight with a powerful enemy, and make him pause beforehand and count the cost. And as the sort of preparation I speak of is utterly hopeless without the union of the provinces, so at a moment when public opinion is being formed on this vital point, as one deeply concerned, I feel it a duty to declare myself unequivocally in favor of Confederation as cheaply and as honorably as possible—but Confederation at all hazards and at all reasonable sacrifices.

After the most mature consideration, and all the arguments I have heard on both sides for the last month, these are my inmost convictions on the necessity and merits of a measure which alone, under Providence, can secure to us social order and peace, and rational liberty, and all the blessings we now enjoy under the mildest Government and the hallowed institutions of the freest and happiest country in the world.

These are the words of a statesman—of a mitred statesman—one of that order of mighty men, powerful in their generation, whose statesmanly gifts have been cast in the strong mould of theological discipline—such men as were XIMENES and WOLSEY. No one more deprecates than I do the interference of clergymen in mere party politics, and I think such is the sentiment also of His Grace of Halifax; but when it is an issue of peace or war, of deliverance or conquest, who has a better, who so good a right to speak as the ministers of the gospel of peace, and justice, and true freedom?

Observe once more these two closing sentences, “I feel it a duty” says the illustrious Archbishop, “to declare myself unequivocally in favor of Confederation as cheaply and as honorably obtained as possible, but Confederation at all hazards and at all reasonable sacrifices. After the most mature consideration, and all the arguments I have heard on both sides for the last month, these are my inmost convictions on the necessity and merits of a measure which alone, under Providence, can secure to us social order and peace, and rational liberty, and all the blessings we now enjoy under the mildest Government and the hallowed institutions of the freest and happiest country in the world.” (Hear, hear.)

The next motive for union to which I shall refer is, that it will strengthen rather than weaken the connection with the empire, so essential to these rising provinces. Those who may be called, if there are any such, the anti-unionists, allege, that this scheme here submitted will bring separation in its train. How, pray? By making these countries more important, will you make them less desirable as connections to England? By making their trade more valuable, will you make her more anxious to get rid of it? By reducing their Federal tariff will you lessen their interest for England? By making them stronger for each other’s aid, will you make her less willing to discharge a lesser than a greater responsibility?

But if the thing did not answer itself, England has answered that she “cordially approves” of our plan of union,—and she has always been accounted a pretty good judge of her own Imperial interests. (Hear, hear.) She does not consider our union inimical to those interests. Instead of looking upon it with a dark and discouraging frown, she cheers us on by her most cordial approval and bids us a hearty “God speed” in the new path we have chosen to enter. (Hear, hear.)

“*As we cannot go alone, and as we do not desire union with the United States, it is the duty of every man to do all in his power to strengthen the connection with Great Britain.*”

But I put it on provincial grounds as well. We are not able to go alone, and if we attempted it we would almost certainly go to our own destruction—so that as we cannot go alone, and as we do not desire union with the United States, it is the duty of every man to do all in his power to strengthen the connection with Great Britain. And how shall we do it? Is it by compelling the Imperial Government to negotiate at Charlottetown, for every man and musket required for our defence, to negotiate again at Halifax, and again at Frederickton, and again at St. John, and again at Quebec? Is it by having these five separate governments that we are to ren-

der the connection desirable and appreciated, or is it by putting the power of these colonies into the hands of one General Government and making the negotiations between two parties only, thereby simplifying the whole transaction and expediting whatever is to be done between the two countries. (Hear, hear.)

I will content myself, Mr. SPEAKER, with those principal motives to union; first, that we are in the rapids, and must go on; next that our neighbors will not, on their side, let us rest supinely, even if we could do so from other causes; and thirdly, that by making the united colonies more valuable as an ally to Great Britain, we shall strengthen rather than weaken the Imperial connexion. (Cheers.)

Let me now, sir, call your attention to the difficulties, past and present, which this great project had to encounter, before it reached the fortunate stage in which we now find it.

When it was first advocated by individuals, however eminent, of course it had but scanty chance of success. (Hear, hear.) That was the first stage; when, as in 1822 and 1839, it found favor with Downing street, it excited the suspicions of the colonists; when it was identified with the Quebec and Halifax railway project, it shared the fate,—it was sacrificed to the jealousies and dissensions which destroyed that particular undertaking. When, as in the case of my hon. friend (Mr. GALT'S) motion in 1858, and my own motion in 1860, the subject was mooted in this House by a private member, the Ministry of the day could not allow so grave a measure to succeed in other hands than their own; when, as was the case in 1858, the Ministry committed themselves to it, the Opposition complained that Parliament had not been consulted. When Canada proposed to move, in 1859, Newfoundland alone responded; when Nova Scotia moved, in 1860, New Brunswick alone agreed to go with her; at all events, Canada did not then consent. (Hear, hear.)

Of late years the language of the Colonial Office, of Mr. LABOUCHERE, of Sir BULWER LYTTON, and of the lamented Duke of NEWCASTLE, was substantially: "Agree among yourselves, gentlemen, and we will not stand in the way." Ah! There was the rub—"Agree among yourselves!" Easier said than done, with five colonies so long estranged, and whose former negotiations had generally ended in bitter controversies.

Up to the last year there was no conjunction of circumstances favorable to the bringing about of this union, and probably if we suffer this opportunity to be wasted we shall never see again such a conjunction of circumstances as will enable us to agree, even so far, among ourselves.

By a most fortunate concurrence of circumstances—by what I presume to call, speaking of events of this magnitude, a providential concurrence of circumstances—the Government of Canada was so modified last spring as to enable it to deal fearlessly with this subject, at the very moment when the coast colonies, despairing of a Canadian union, were arranging a conference of their own for a union of their own. Our Government embraced among its members from the western section the leaders of the former Ministry and former Opposition from that section. At the time it was formed it announced to this House that it was its intention as part of its policy to seek a conference with the lower colonies, and endeavor to bring about a general union. This House formally gave the Government its confidence after the announcement of this policy, and although I have no desire to strain terms, it does appear to me that this House did commit itself to the principle of a union of the colonies if found practicable. That is my view, sir, of the relations of this House to the Government after it gave it expressly its confidence. Other members of the House take another view of that matter, they do not think themselves committed even to the principle, and they certainly are not to the details of the scheme. (Hear.)

After the Coalition was formed an incident occurred, which, though not of national importance, it would be most ungrateful of me to forget. An intercolonial excursion was proposed and was rendered practicable through the public spirit of two gentlemen representing our great railway, of which so many hard things have been said that I feel it my duty to say this good thing—I refer to the Honorable Mr. FERRIER and Mr. BRYDGES. (Cheers.) Forty members of this House, twenty-five members of the other House, and forty gentlemen of the press and other professions, from Canada, joined in that excursion. So many Canadians had

never seen so much of the Lower Provinces before, and the people of the Lower Provinces had never seen so many Canadians. Our reception was beyond all description kind and cordial. The general sentiment of union was everywhere cheered to the echo, though I am sorry to find that some of those who cheered then, when it was but a general sentiment, seem to act very differently now, that it has become a ripened project, and I fear that they do not intend to act up to the words they then uttered. They may, perhaps, intend to do so, but they have a very odd way of going about it. (Laughter.)

Well, sir, this was in August; the Charlottetown Conference was called in September, the Quebec Conference in October, and the tour of the maritime delegates through Canada took place in November. Four months of the eight which have elapsed since we promised this House to deal with it have been almost wholly given up to this great enterprise.

Let me bear my tribute, Mr. SPEAKER, now that I refer to the Conference, to the gentlemen from the Lower Provinces, who sat so many days in council with us under this roof. (Cheers.) A very worthy citizen of Montreal, when I went up a day or two in advance of the Montreal banquet, asked me, with a curious sort of emphasis—"What sort of people are they?"—meaning the maritime delegates. I answered him then, as I repeat now, that they were, as a body, as able and accomplished a body as I thought any new country in the world could produce,—and that some among them would compare not unfavourably in ability and information with some of the leading commoners of England. As our Government included a representation both of the former Opposition, and the former Ministry, so their delegations were composed in about equal parts of the Opposition and Ministerial parties of their several provinces. A more hard-working set of men; men more tenacious of their own rights, yet more considerate for those of others; men of readier resources in debate; men of gentler manners; men more willing to bear and forbear, I never can hope to see together at one council table again. (Cheers.)

But why need I dwell on this point? They were seen and heard in all our principal cities, and I am sure every Canadian who met them here was proud of them as fellow-subjects, and would be happy to feel that he could soon call them fellow-countrymen in fact as well as in name. (Cheers.)

Sir, by this combination of great abilities—by this coalition of leaders who never before acted together—by this extraordinary armistice of party warfare, obtained in every colony at the same moment—after all this labor and all this self-sacrifice—after all former impediments had been most fortunately overcome—the treaty was concluded and signed by us all—and there it lies on your table.

The propositions contained in it have been objected to, and we were reminded the other evening by the honorable member for Chateauguay, that we are not a treaty-making power. Well, in reference to that objection, I believe the Imperial Government has in certain cases, such as the Reciprocity Treaty, conceded to these provinces the right of coercion; and in this case there is the Imperial Despatch of 1862 to Lord MULGRAVE, Governor of Nova Scotia, distinctly authorizing the public men of the colonies to confer with each other on the subject of union, and writing them to submit the result of their conferences to the Imperial Government. (Hear, hear.) We assembled under authority of that despatch, and acted under the sanction it gave. Everything we did was done in form and with propriety, and the result of our proceedings is the document that has been submitted to the Imperial Government as well as to this House, and which we speak of here as a treaty.

And that there may be no doubt about our position in regard to that document we say, question it you may, reject it you may, or accept it you may, but alter it you may not. (Hear, hear.) It is beyond your power, or our power, to alter it. There is not a sentence—ay, or even a word—you can alter without desiring to throw out the document. Alter it, and we know at once what you mean—you thereby declare yourselves anti-unionists. (Hear, hear.) On this point, I repeat after all my hon. friends who have already spoken, for one party to alter a treaty, is, of course, to destroy it.

Let us be frank with each other; you who do not like our work, nor do you like us who stand by it, clause by clause, line by line, and letter by letter. Oh! but this clause ought to run thus, and this other clause thus. Does any hon. member seriously think that any treaty in the world between five separate provinces ever gave full and entire satisfaction on every point to every party? Does any hon. member seriously expect to have a constitutional act framed to his order, or my order, or any man's order? No, sir, I am sure no legislator at least since ANACHARSIS CLOOTZ was "Attorney General of the Human Race" ever expected such ideal perfection. (Laughter.)

“Does any hon. member seriously think that any treaty in the world between five separate provinces ever gave full and entire satisfaction on every point to every party?”

It may be said by some hon. gentleman that they admit the principle of this measure to be good, but that it should be dealt with as an ordinary parliamentary subject in the usual parliamentary manner. Mr. SPEAKER, this is not an ordinary parliamentary measure. We do not legislate upon it—we do not enact it,—that is for a higher authority. Suppose the Address adopted by this House to-morrow, is the act of this House final and conclusive? No. It is for the Imperial Parliament to act upon it. (Hear, hear.) It will be that body that will cause the several propositions to be moulded into a measure which will have the form of law, and these resolutions will probably be the *ipsissima verba* of the measure they will give us and the other provinces.

But some hon. gentlemen opposite say, that if there be defects in this measure they ought to be remedied now, and that the Government ought to be glad to have them pointed out. Yes, surely, if this were simply the act of the Parliament of Canada; but it is not to be our act alone. It is an Address to the Throne, in the terms of which other colonies are to agree, and even if we were to make alterations in it, we cannot bind them to accept them. If we were weak and wicked enough to alter a solemn agreement with the other provinces, the moment their representatives had turned their backs and gone home, what purpose would it serve except that of defeating the whole measure and throwing it as well as the country back again into chaos. (Hear, hear.)

I admit, sir, as we have been told, that we ought to aim at perfection, but who has ever attained it, except perhaps the hon. member for Brome. (Laughter.) We, however, did strive and aim at the mark, and we think we made a tolerably good shot. The hon. member for Chateauguay will not be satisfied—insatiate archer!—unless we hit the bull's eye. (Laughter.) My hon. friend is well read in political literature—will he mention me one authority, from the first to the last, who ever held that human government ever was or could be anything more than what a modern sage called "an approximation to the right," and an ancient called "the possible best." Well, we believe we have here given to our countrymen of all the provinces the possible best—that we have given it to them in the most imperative moment—their representatives and ours have labored at it, letter and spirit, form and substance, until they found this basis of agreement, which we are all alike confident will not now, nor for many a day to come, be easily swept away.

Before I pass to another point, sir, permit me to pay my tribute of unfeigned respect to one of our Canadian colleagues in this work, who is no longer with us; I mean the present Vice-Chancellor of Upper Canada (Hon. Mr. MOWAT), who took a constant and honorable share in the preparation of this project. (Cheers.)

Now, sir, I wish to say a few words in reference to what I call the social relations which I think ought to exist and will spring up between the people of the Lower Provinces and ourselves if there is a closer

communication established between us, and also in reference to the social fitness of each of the parties to this proposed union.

And first, I will make a remark to some of the French Canadian gentlemen who are said to be opposed to our project, on French Canadian grounds only. I will remind them, I hope not improperly, that every one of the colonies we now propose to re-unite under one rule—in which they shall have a potential voice—were once before united, as New France. (Cheers.) Newfoundland, the uttermost, was theirs, and one large section of its coast is still known as “the French shore”; Cape Breton was theirs till the final fall of Louisburgh; Prince Edward Island was their Island of St. Jean, and Charlottetown was their Port Joli; in the heart of Nova Scotia was that fair Acadian land, where the roll of LONGFELLOW’S noble hexameters may any day be heard in every wave that breaks upon the base of Cape Blomedon. (Cheers.)

“Every one of the colonies we now propose to re-unite under one rule—in which they shall have a potential voice—were once before united, as New France.”

In the northern counties of New Brunswick, from the Miramichi to the Matapedia, they had their forts and farms, their churches and their festivals, before the English speech had ever once been heard between those rivers. Nor is that tenacious Norman and Breton race extinct in their old haunts and homes. I have heard one of the members for Cape Breton speak in high terms of that portion of his constituency, and I believe I am correct in saying that Mr. LE VISCONTE, the late Finance Minister of Nova Scotia, was, in the literal sense of the term, an Acadian. Mr. COZZANS, of New York, who wrote a very readable little book the other day about Nova Scotia, describes the French residents near the basin of Minas, and he says especially of the women, “they might have stepped out of Normandy a hundred years ago!” In New Brunswick there is more than one county, especially in the north, where business, and law, and politics, require a knowledge of both French and English. A worthy friend of ours, Hon. Mr. MITCHELL, of Chatham, who was present at the earlier meetings of the Conference, owed his first election for one of these counties, because he was Pierre Michel, and could speak to his French constituents in their own language.

I will, with leave of the House, read on this interesting subject a passage from a very capital sketch of the French district of New Brunswick in 1863, by Lieutenant Governor GORDON (it is in GALSTON’S Vacation Tourist for 1864), and is exceedingly interesting throughout:

The French population, which forms so large a proportion among the inhabitants of the counties of Westmoreland, Kent and Gloucester, appears to me as contented as the habitants of Victoria, but hardly equally as well off. There was an air of comfort and bien-être about the large timber two-storied houses, painted a dark Indian red, standing among the trees, the numerous good horses, the well-tilled fields and sleek cattle, which is wanting on the sea coast. We stopped after a pleasant drive, affording us good views of the beautiful peak of Green River Mountain, at the house of a Monsieur VIOLET, at the mouth of Grand River, which was to be our starting point. The whole aspect of the farm was that of the métairie in Normandy—the outer doors of the house gaudily painted—the panels of a different color from the frame—the large, open, uncarpeted room, with its bare, shining floor—the lasses at the spinning-wheel—the French costume and appearance of Madame VIOLET and her sons and daughters, all carried me back to the other side of the Atlantic. After a short conversation with the VIOLETS, we walked down to the bridge, where two log-canoes, manned by Frenchmen—three CYRS and a THIBAudeau—

were waiting for us, and pushed off from the shore. A turn in the river very speedily hid from us the bridge and farm, our empty carriage, and the friends who had accompanied us from Grand Falls standing on the bank, in the evening sunshine, waving us their farewells, and it was not without pleasure that we felt that the same turn which screened them from our view, separated us for some time to come from civilized life.

It will be observed Governor GORDON speaks of four counties in the north of New Brunswick which still bear a marked French character. Well, gentlemen of French origin, we propose to restore these long-lost compatriots to your protection: in the Federal Union, which will recognize equally both languages, they will naturally look to you; their petitions will come to you, and their representatives will naturally be found allied with you. Suppose those four New Brunswick counties are influenced by the French vote, and two in Nova Scotia, and one in Newfoundland, you will, should you need them, have them as sure allies to your own compact body, to aid your legitimate influence in the Federal councils. (Cheers.)

I shall proceed with my outline analysis of the maritime population, in order to establish the congruity and congeniality of our proposed union.

In point of time, the next oldest element in that population is the Irish settlement of Ferryland, in Newfoundland, undertaken by Lord BALTIMORE and Lord FALKLAND (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at the time), immediately after the restoration of King CHARLES I, soon after 1660. Newfoundland still remains strongly Irish, as is natural, since it is the next parish to Ireland—(laughter)—and I think we saw a very excellent specimen of its Irish natives at our Conference, in AMBROSE SHEA. (Cries of hear, hear.) To me, I confess, it is particularly grateful to reflect that the only Irish colony, as it may be called, of our group, is to be included in the new arrangements. (Hear.)

Another main element in the Lower Province population is the Highland Scotch. Large tracts of Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton were granted after the Peace of Paris, to officers and men of FRAZER'S Highlanders and other Scottish regiments, which had distinguished themselves during the seven years' war. If my hon. friend from Glengarry (Mr. D. A. MACDONALD) had been with us last September at Charlottetown, he would have met clansmen, whom he would have been proud to know, and who could have conversed with him in his own cherished Gaelic.

MR. D. A. MACDONALD.—They are all over the world. (Laughter.)

HON. MR. MCGEE.—So much the better for the world. (Cheers.) And I will tell him what I think is to their honor, that the Highlanders in all the provinces preserve faithfully the religion, as well as the language and traditions, of their fathers. The Catholic Bishop of Charlottetown is a MCINTYRE; his Right Rev. brother of Arichat (Cape Breton) is a MCKINNON; and in the list of the clergy, I find a constant succession of such names as MCDONALD, MCGILLIS, MCGILLIVRAY, MCLEOD, MCKENZIE and CAMERON—all "Anglo-Saxons" of course, and mixed up with them FOURNIERS, GAUVREAUS, PAQUETS and MARTELLS, whose origin is easy to discover. (Cheers.)

Another of the original elements of that population remains to be noticed—the U. E. Loyalists, who founded New Brunswick, just as surely as they founded Upper Canada, for whom New Brunswick was made a separate province in 1794, as Upper Canada was for their relatives in 1791. Their descendants still flourish in the land, holding many positions of honor, and as a representative of the class, I shall only mention Judge WILMOT, who the other day declared in charging one of his grand juries, that if it were necessary to carry Confederation in New Brunswick, so impressed was he with the necessity of the measure to the very existence of British laws and British institutions, he was prepared to quit the bench for politics. (Cheers.)

There are other elements also not to be overlooked. The thrifty Germans of Lunenburg, whose homes are the neatest upon the land, as their fleet is the tightest on the sea, and other smaller subdivisions; but I shall not prolong this analysis. I may observe, however, that this population is almost universally a native

population of three or four or more generations. In New Brunswick, at the most there is about twelve per cent, of an immigrant people; in Nova Scotia, about eight; in the two islands, very much less.

In the eye of the law we admit no disparity between natives and immigrants in this country; but it is to be considered that where men are born in the presence of the graves of their fathers, for even a few generations, the influence of that fact is great in enhancing their attachment to that soil. I admit, for my part, as an immigrant, of no divided allegiance to Canada and her interests; but it would be untrue and paltry to deny a divided affection between the old country and the new. Kept within just bounds, such an affection is reasonable, is right and creditable to those who cherish it. (Hear, hear.)

“*In the eye of the law we admit no disparity between natives and immigrants in this country.*”

Why I refer to this broad fact which distinguishes the populations of all the four seaward provinces as much as it does Lower Canada herself, is, to show the fixity and stability of that population; to show that they are by birth British Americans; that they can nearly all, of every origin, use that proud phrase when they look daily from their doors, “this is my own, my native land.” (Cheers.) Let but that population and ours come together for a generation or two—such are the elements that compose, such the conditions that surround it—and their mutual descendants will hear with wonder, when the history of these present transactions are written, that this plan of union could ever have been seriously opposed by statesmen in Canada or elsewhere. (Cheers.)

I am told, however, by one or two members of this House, and by exclusively-minded Canadians out of it that they cannot entertain any patriotic feeling about this union with New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, and that they cannot look with any interest at those colonies, with which we have had hitherto so little association. “What’s Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?” Well, I answer to that, know them and my word for it, you will like them. I have been on seven or eight journeys there, and have seen much of the people, and the more I have seen of them, the more I respected and esteemed them. (Hear, hear.)

I say, then, to these gentlemen, that if you want to feel any patriotism on the subject; if you want to stir up a common sentiment of affection between these people and ourselves, bring us all into closer relation together, and having the elements of a vigorous nationality with us, each will find something to like and respect in the other; mutual confidence and respect will follow, and a feeling of being engaged in a common cause for the good of a common nationality will grow up of itself without being forced by any man’s special advocacy. (Hear, hear.) The thing who shuts up his heart against his kindred, his neighbors, and his fellows subjects, may be a very pretty fellow at a parish vestry, but do you call such a forked-radish as that, a man? (Laughter.) Don’t so abuse the noblest word in the language. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, there is one other argument for this union, or rather an illustration of its mutually advantageous character, which I draw from the physical geography and physical resources of the whole territory which it is proposed to unite; but before I draw the attention of the House to it, I may perhaps refer to a charge that probably will be made against me, that I am making what may appear to be a non-political speech. If it be non-political in the sense of non-partisan, then I plead guilty to the charge; but I think that on some of the points to which I have alluded the country is desirous of being informed, and as many hon. gentleman have not had time to make a tour of the country to the east of us, those who have had the opportunity of doing so cannot, I think, better subserve the interest of the community than by giving what appears to them a fair,

just and truthful sketch of those provinces and their people, and thus informing those in Canada who have not had the opportunity of making observations for themselves on the spot. (Hear, hear)

It was remarked by the late Sir JOHN BEVEKLEY ROBINSON, in his letter to Lord JOHN RUSSELL, in 1839, that if the British Government had attempted to maintain the ancient boundaries of New France, in the treaty which acknowledged the United States, it would have been impossible to do so. Those boundaries extend to Ohio on the south, and included much of what is now called by our neighbours “the North-West.” There is great force, I think, in this observation.

But in relation to what I may call the ground-plan on which we propose to erect our constitutional edifice, its natural oneness is admirable to contemplate. There is not one port or harbour of all the provinces now proposing to confederate, which cannot be reached from any other by all vessels, if not of too great draught, without ever once leaving our own waters. From the head of Lake Superior the same craft may coast uninterruptedly, always within sight of our own shores nearly the distance of a voyage to England—to St. John, Newfoundland. (Cheers)

We sometimes complain of our inland navigation, that we have it free but half the year round, but what it lacks at one season, it amply compensates by its vast capacity. (Cheers.) Last summer, when we visited Halifax in the *Queen Victoria*, which the good people of that blockade running stronghold mistook for a Confederate cruiser, we were the better part of a week steaming away, always in British American waters, within sight of the bold and beautiful coasts, which it was our privilege to call our own. (Cheers.) While we were thus following our river system to the open sea, I could not help often recurring to the vast extent of the whole. If any hon. gentleman who has never made, and who cannot find time to make, a journey through his own country, will only go to the library he will find an excellent substitute for such a voyage in KEITH JOHNSTON’S Physical Atlas, a book that when one opens its leaves his brain opens with the book. (Laughter.) He will find that our matchless St. Lawrence drains an area of 298,000 square miles, of which only 94,000 are occupied by the five great lakes taken together.

I shall not attempt to tread in the path of my two friends who sit next me (Hon. Messrs. GALT and BROWN) by exhibiting in any detail the prospects of mutual commercial advantages opened up by this union. I have prepared a statement on this subject, giving certain general results,—which I do not present as complete, but only as proximately correct—and which I now beg to read to the House:

[Ed. Table detailing territory, population, representation, debt, revenue and expenditure of the provinces omitted]

But there is one special source of wealth to be found in the Maritime Provinces, which was not in any detail exhibited by my hon. friends—I allude to the important article of coal. I think there can be no doubt that, in some parts of Canada, we are fast passing out of the era of wood as fuel, and entering on that of coal. In my own city every year, there is great suffering among the poor from the enormous price of fuel, and large sums are paid away by national societies and benevolent individuals, to prevent whole families perishing for want of fuel. I believe we must all conclude with Sir WILLIAM LOGAN that we have no coal in Canada, and I may venture to state, on my own authority, another fact, that we have—a five months’ winter, generally very cold. Now, what are the coal resources of our maritime friends, to whose mines Confederation would give us free and untaxed access forever? I take these data from the authority in my hand—from the highest authority on the subject—TAYLOR’S Coal Fields of the New World:

Dr. A. GESNER, in a communication to the Geological Society of London, 1843, states that the area of coal fields in New Brunswick has been recently determined to be 7,500 square miles; 10,000 square miles, including Nova Scotia, but exclusive of Cape Breton. Since his first report he has explored the whole of this vast region, and has found the area covered by that coal formation to be no less than 8,000 square miles in New Brunswick. He says the most productive

coal beds prevail in the interior, while those of Nova Scotia occur on the shores of her bays and rivers, where they offer every advantage for mining operations. The coal fields of the two provinces are united at the boundary line, and belong to the carboniferous period. The developments of almost every season illustrate more clearly the magnitude of these coal fields, which extend from Newfoundland by Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and across a large portion of New Brunswick into the state of Maine. Mr. HENWOOD, a geologist of high standing, observes that the beauty and extent of these coal treasures it is impossible to describe. In Nova Scotia, Dr. GESNER'S statements exhibit an area of coal formation of 2,500 square miles, while Messrs. LOGAN, DAWSON and BROWN greatly exceed even that area. Sir W. E. LOGAN demonstrated by a laborious survey the thickness or depth of the whole group in Northern Nova Scotia to be over 2¾ miles, an amount which far exceeds anything seen in the coal formation in other parts of North America; in this group there are seventy-six coal beds one above the other.

I must say, sir, that this is a cheering statement of facts, coming to us on the very highest authority, and I feel warming with the subject, even while making the statement. (Laughter.) These exhaustless coal fields will, under this plan—which is in fact our Reciprocity Treaty with the Lower Provinces—become, hereafter, the great resource of our towns for fuel.

I see the cry is raised below by the anti-unionists that to proceed with Confederation would be to entail the loss of the New England market for their coals. I do not quite see how they make that out, but even an anti-unionist might see that the population of Canada is within a fraction of that of all New England put together, that we consume in this country as much fuel per annum as they do in all New England; and, therefore, that we offer them a market under the union equal to that which these theorizers want to persuade their followers they would lose. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, another cry raised by the anti-unionists below is, that they would have to fight for the defence of Canada—a very specious argument. What, sir, three millions and one million unite, and the one million must do the fighting for all. In proportion to their numbers no doubt these valiant gentlemen will have to fight, if fighting is to be done, but not one man or one shilling more than Canada, *pro rata*, will they have to fight or spend. On the contrary, the greater community, if she should not happen to be first attacked, would be obliged to fight for them, and in doing so, I do not hesitate to say, on far better authority than my own, that the man who fights for the valley and harbour of St. John, or even for Halifax, fights for Canada.

“ I do not hesitate to say, on far better authority than my own, that the man who fights for the valley and harbour of St. John, or even for Halifax, fights for Canada.”

I will suppose another not impossible case. I will suppose a hostile American army, on a fishery or any other war, finding it easier and cheaper to seize the lower colonies by land than by sea, by a march from a convenient rendezvous on Lake Champlain, through Lower Canada, into the upper part of New Brunswick, and so downward to the sea—a march like SHERMAN'S march from Knoxville to Savannah. While we obstructed such a march by every means in our power, from the Richelieu to Rivière du Loup, whose battles would we be fighting then? Why the seaports aimed at, for our common subjugation. (Hear, hear.)

But the truth is, all these selfish views and arrangements are remarkably short-sighted, unworthy of the subject, and unworthy even of those who use them. In a commercial, in a military, in every point of view, we

are all, rightly considered, dependant on each other. Newfoundland dominates the Gulf, and none of us can afford to be separated from her. Lord CHATHAM said he would as soon abandon Plymouth as Newfoundland, and he is said to have understood how to govern men.

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are Siamese twins, held together by that ligature of land between Baie Verte and Cumberland Basin, and the fate of the one must follow the fate of the other (Hear, hear.) Prince Edward is only a little bit, broken off by the Northumberland Strait from those two bigger brethren, and Upper and Lower Canada are essential to each other's prosperity. Our very physical outline teaches us the lesson of union, and indicates how many mutual advantages we may all derive from the treaty we have made.

Mr. SPEAKER, while we in Canada have no doubt of the ratification of the Intercolonial Treaty, by this House and country, I cannot conceal from myself that our friends in the Lower Provinces are fighting a battle with narrow views and vested interests which are always most bitter in the smallest communities. There are coasting trade interests and railway interests at work; and there are the strong interests of honest ignorance and dishonest ingenuity. What can these men mean, who are no fools? Do they, too, fancy they can get a government made to their own private order? Do they think they can go on on the old system? Do they mean to give up the country to the Americans? Why not hang up at once the sign, "these provinces for sale—terms cash!—'greenbacks' taken at full value!"

I rejoice to see the unionists of the Maritime Provinces so resolved, so high spirited and so united—and though their victory will not be won without work, yet I feel assured it will be a victory. If the honest and misguided would but reflect for a moment the risks they run by defeating, or even delaying this measure, I am sure they would, even yet, retract. (Hear, hear.)

If we reject it now, is there any human probability that we shall ever see again so propitious a set of circumstances to bring about the same results? How they came about we all know. (Hear, hear.) The strange and fortunate events that have occurred in Canada; the extraordinary concessions made by the leaders of the Governments below—Dr. TUPPER, the Nova Scotian Premier, for instance, admitting to his confidence, and bringing with him here as his co-representatives, Hon. Messrs. ARCHIBALD and MCCULLY, two of his most determined political opponents—can we ever expect, if we reject this scheme, that the same or similar things will occur again to favor it? Can we expect to see the leader of the Upper Canadian conservative party and the leader of the Upper Canadian liberals sitting side by side again, if this project fails to work out, in a spirit of mutual compromise and concession, the problem of our constitutional difficulties?

No, sir, it is too much to expect. Miracles would cease to be miracles if they were events of every day occurrence; the very nature of wonders requires that they should be rare; and this is a miraculous and wonderful circumstance, that men at the head of the Governments in five separate provinces, and men at the head of the parties opposing them, all agreed at the same time to sink party differences for the good of all, and did not shrink, at the risk of having their motives misunderstood, from associating together for the purpose of bringing about this result. (Cheers.)

I have asked, sir, what risks do we run if we reject this measure? We run the risk of being swallowed up by the spirit of universal democracy that prevails in the United States. Their usual and favourite motto is:

No pent up Utica contracts our powers,
But the whole boundless continent is ours.

That is the paraphrase of the Monroe doctrine. And the popular voice has favoured—ay, and the greatest statesmen among them have looked upon it as inevitable—an extension of the principles of democracy over this continent. Now, I suppose a universal democracy is no more acceptable to us than a universal monarchy in Europe, and yet for three centuries—from CHARLES V to NAPOLEON—our fathers combatted to the death against the subjection of all Europe to a single system or a single master, and heaped up a debt which has since burthened the producing classes of the Empire with an enormous load of taxation, which, perhaps,

none other except the hardy and ever-growing industry of those little islands could have borne up under. (Hear, hear.) The idea of a universal democracy in America is no more welcome to the minds of thoughtful men among us, than was that of a universal monarchy to the mind of the thoughtful men who followed the standard of the third WILLIAM in Europe, or who afterwards, under the great MARLBOROUGH, opposed the armies of the particular dynasty that sought to place Europe under a single dominion. (Hear, hear.)

But if we are to have a universal democracy on this continent, the Lower Provinces—the smaller fragments—will be “gobbled up” first, and we will come in afterwards by way of dessert. (Laughter.)

The proposed Confederation will enable us to bear up shoulder to shoulder; to resist the spread of this universal democracy doctrine; it will make it more desirable to maintain on both sides the connection that binds us to the parent State; it will raise us from the position of mere dependent colonies to a new and more important position; it will give us a new lease of existence under other and more favorable conditions; and resistance to this project, which is pregnant with so many advantages to us and to our children, means simply this, ultimate union with the United States. (Cheers.) But these are small matters, wholly unworthy of the attention of the SMITHS, and ANNANDS, and PALMERS, who have come forward to forbid the banns of British American union.

Mr. SPEAKER, before I draw to a close the little remainder of what I have to say—and I am sorry to have detained the House so long—(cries of “No, no”)—I beg to offer a few observations *apropos* of my own position as an English-speaking member for Lower Canada.

I venture, in the first place, to observe that there seems to be a good deal of exaggeration on the subject of race, occasionally introduced, both on the one side and the other, in this section of the country. I congratulate my honorable friend the Attorney General for this section on his freedom from such prejudices in general, though I still think in matters of patronage and the like he always thinks first of his own compatriots—(laughter)—for which neither do I blame him. But this theory of race is sometimes carried to an anti-Christian and unphilosophical excess. Whose words are those—“GOD hath made of one blood all the nations that dwell on the face of the earth?” Is not that the true theory of race?

“*The French Canadians have never been an intolerant people; it is not in their temper, unless they had been persecuted, perhaps, and then it might have been as it has been with other races of all religions.*”

For my part, I am not afraid of the French Canadian majority in the future Local Government doing injustice, except accidentally; not because I am of the same religion as themselves; for origin and language are barriers stronger to divide men in this world than is religion to unite them. Neither do I believe that my Protestant compatriots need have any such fear. The French Canadians have never been an intolerant people; it is not in their temper, unless they had been persecuted, perhaps, and then it might have been as it has been with other races of all religions.

Perhaps, on this subject, the House will allow me to read a very striking illustration of the tolerance of French Canadian character from a book I hold in my hand, the Digest of the Synod Minutes of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, by my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. KEMP, of the Free Church, of Montreal. The passage is on page seven of the introduction:—

About the year 1790 the Presbyterians of Montreal of all denominations, both British and American, organized themselves into a Church, and in the following year secured the services of the Rev. JOHN YOUNG. At this time they met in the Recollet Roman Catholic Church, but in the year following they erected the edifice which is now known as St. Gabriel Street Church—the oldest Protestant Church in the province. In their early Minutes we find them, in acknowledgment of the kindness of the Recollet Fathers, presenting them with “One box of candles, 56 lbs., at 8d., and one hogshead of Spanish wine at £6 5s.”

(Laughter.) I beg my hon. friends, who may have different notions of Christian intercourse at this time of day, just to fancy doings of that sort. (Hear, hear.) Here, on the one hand, are the Recollet Fathers giving up one of their own churches to the disciples of JOHN KNOX to enable them to worship GOD after their own manner, and perhaps to have a gird at Popery in the meantime—(great laughter)—and here, on the other hand, are the grateful Presbyterians presenting to these same Seminary priests wine and wax tapers in acknowledgment of the use of their church, for Presbyterian service. Certainly a more characteristic instance of true tolerance on both sides can hardly be found in the history of any other country.

I cite this little incident to draw from it this practical moral—that those who are seeking, and, in some particulars, I believe justly seeking, the settlement of Protestant education in Lower Canada on firmer ground than it now occupies, might well afford to leave the two great Seminaries of Montreal and Quebec at peace. No two institutions in Christendom ever more conscientiously fulfilled the ends of their erection; and whoever does not know all, but even a little, of the good services they have rendered to both the people and the Government of Lower Canada, to the civilization and settlement of this country, has much yet to learn of the history of Canada. (Hear, hear.)

To close this topic, I have no doubt whatever, with a good deal of moderation and a proper degree of firmness, all that the Protestant minority in Lower Canada can require, by way of security to their educational system, will be cheerfully granted to them by this House. I, for one, as a Roman Catholic, will cordially second and support any such amendments, properly framed. I will merely add in relation to an observation of my friend (Hon. Mr. BROWN) last night on the subject of the Catholic Separate Schools of Upper Canada, that I accepted for my own part, as a finality, the amended act of 1863. I did so because it granted all the petitioners asked, and I think they ought to be satisfied. I will be no party to the re-opening of the question; but I say this, that if there are to be any special guarantees or grants extended to the Protestant minority of Lower Canada, I think the Catholic minority in Upper Canada ought to be placed in precisely the same position—neither better nor worse. (Hear, hear.) At present I shall not add another word on this subject, as I am not aware of the particular nature of the amendments asked for at present, either east or west. (Hear, hear.)

All who have spoken on this subject have said a good deal, as was natural, of the interests at stake in the success or failure of this plan of Confederation. I trust the House will permit me to add a few words as to the principle of Confederation considered in itself. In the application of this principle to former constitutions, there certainly always was one fatal defect, the weakness of the central authority. Of all the Federal constitutions I have ever heard or read of, this was the fatal malady: they were short-lived, they died of consumption. (Laughter.)

But I am not prepared to say that because the Tuscan League elected its chief magistrates for two months and lasted a century, that therefore the Federal principle failed. On the contrary, there is something in the frequent, fond recurrence of mankind to this principle, among the freest people, in their best times and worst dangers, which leads me to believe, that it has a very deep hold in human nature itself—an excellent basis for a government to have. But indeed, sir, the main question is the due distribution of powers—a question I dare not touch tonight, but which I may be prepared to say something on before the vote is taken.

The principle itself seems to me to be capable of being so adapted as to promote internal peace and external security, and to call into action a genuine, enduring and heroic patriotism. It is a fruit of this principle

that makes the modern Italian look back with sorrow and pride over a dreary waste of seven centuries to the famous field of Legnano; it was this principle kindled the beacons which burn yet on the rocks of Uri; it was this principle that broke the dykes of Holland and overwhelmed the Spanish with the fate of the Egyptian oppressor. It is a principle capable of inspiring a noble ambition and a most salutary emulation.

You have sent your young men to guard your frontier. You want a principle to guard your young men, and thus truly defend your frontier. For what do good men (who make the best soldiers) fight? For a line of scripture or chalk line—for a pretext or for a principle? What is a better boundary between nations than a parallel of latitude, or even a natural obstacle?—what really keeps nations intact and apart?—a principle. When I can hear our young men say as proudly, “our Federation” or “our Country,” or “our Kingdom,” as the young men of other countries do, speaking of their own, then I shall have less apprehension for the result of whatever trials the future may have in store for us. (Cheers.)

It has been said that the Federal Constitution of the United States has failed. I, sir, have never said it. The Attorney General West told you the other night that he did not consider it a failure; and I remember that in 1861, when in this House I remarked the same thing, the only man who then applauded the statement was the Attorney General West—so that it is pretty plain he did not simply borrow the argument for use the other night, when he was advocating a Federal union among ourselves. (Hear, hear.) It may be a failure for us, paradoxical as this may seem, and yet not a failure for them. They have had eighty years’ use of it, and having discovered its defects, may apply a remedy and go on with it eighty years longer. But we also are lookers on, who saw its defects as the machine worked, and who have prepared contrivances by which it can be improved and kept in more perfect order when applied to ourselves.

““ *One of the foremost statesmen in England, distinguished alike in politics and literature, has declared ... that we have combined the best parts of the British and the American systems of government.*”

And one of the foremost statesmen in England, distinguished alike in politics and literature, has declared, as the President of the Council informed us, that we have combined the best parts of the British and the American systems of government, and this opinion was deliberately formed at a distance, without prejudice, and expressed without interested motives of any description. (Hear, hear.) We have, in relation to the head of the Government, in relation to the judiciary, in relation to the second chamber of the Legislature, in relation to the financial responsibility of the General Government, and in relation to the public officials whose tenure of office is during good behaviour, instead of at the caprice of a party—in all these respects we have adopted the British system; in other respects we have learned something from the American system, and I trust and believe we have made a very tolerable combination of both. (Hear, hear.)

The principle of Federation is a generous principle. It is a principle that gives men local duties to discharge, and invests them at the same time with general supervision, that excites a healthy sense of responsibility and comprehension. It is a principle that has produced a wise and true spirit of statesmanship in all countries in which it has ever been applied. It is a principle eminently favorable to liberty, because local affairs are left to be dealt with by local bodies and cannot be interfered with by those who have no local interest in them, while matters of a general character are left exclusively to a general government. It is a principle coincident with every government that ever gave extended and important services to a country, because all governments have been more or less confederations in their character. Spain was a federation, for although it had a king reigning over the whole country, it had its local governments for the administra-

tion of local affairs. The British Isles are a confederation, and the old French dukedoms were confederated in the States General. It is a principle that runs through all the history of civilization in one form or another, and exists alike in monarchies and democracies; and having adopted it as the principle of our future government, there were only the details to arrange and agree upon.

“*The principle of Federation is a generous principle. It is a principle that gives men local duties to discharge, and invests them at the same time with general supervision, that excites a healthy sense of responsibility and comprehension.*”

Those details are before you. It is not in our power to alter any of them even if the House desires it. If the House desires it can reject the treaty, but we cannot, nor can the other provinces which took part in its negotiation, consent that it shall be altered in the slightest particular. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. SPEAKER, I am sorry to have detained the House so long, and was not aware till I had been some time on my legs that my physical force was so inadequate to the exposition of these few points which, not specially noticed by my predecessors in this debate, I undertook to speak upon.

We stand at present in this position: we are bound in honor, we are bound in good faith, to four provinces occupied by our fellow-colonists, to carry out the measure agreed upon here in the last week of October. We are bound to carry it to the foot of the Throne, and ask there from Her Majesty, according to the first resolution of the Address, that She will be graciously pleased to direct legislation to be had on this subject. We go to the Imperial Government, the common arbiter of us all, in our true Federal metropolis—we go there to ask for our fundamental Charter. We hope, by having that Charter that can only be amended by the authority that made it, that we will lay the basis of permanency for our future government.

The two great things that all men aim at in any free government, are liberty and permanency. We have had liberty enough—too much perhaps in some respects—but at all events, liberty to our heart’s content. There is not on the face of the earth a freer people than the inhabitants of these colonies. But it is necessary there should be respect for the law, a high central authority, the virtue of civil obedience, obeying the law for the law’s sake; even when a man’s private conscience may convince him sufficiently that the law in some cases may be wrong, he is not to set up his individual will against the will of the country expressed through its recognised constitutional organs.

We need in these provinces, we can bear, a large infusion of authority. I am not at all afraid this Constitution errs on the side of too great conservatism. If it be found too conservative now, the downward tendency in political ideas which characterizes this democratic age, is a sufficient guarantee for amendment. That is the principle on which this instrument is strong and worthy of the support of every colonist, and through which it will secure the warm approbation of the Imperial authorities.

We have here no traditions and ancient venerable institutions; here, there are no aristocratic elements hallowed by time or bright deeds; here, every man is the first settler of the land, or removed from the first settler one or two generations at the furthest; here, we have no architectural monuments calling up old associations; here, we have none of those old popular legends and stories which in other countries have exercised a powerful share in the government; here, every man is the son of his own works. (Hear, hear.) We

have none of those influences about us which, elsewhere, have their effect upon government just as much as the invisible atmosphere itself tends to influence life, and animal and vegetable existence.

This is a new land—a land of pretension because it is new; because classes and systems have not had that time to grow here naturally. We have no aristocracy but of virtue and talent, which is the only true aristocracy, and is the old and true meaning of the term. (Hear, hear.) There is a class of men rising in these colonies, superior in many respects to others with whom they might be compared.

“This is a new land ... We have no aristocracy but of virtue and talent, which is the only true aristocracy, and is the old and true meaning of the term.”

What I should like to see is—that fair representatives of the Canadian and Acadian aristocracy, should be sent to the foot of the Throne with that scheme, to obtain for it the royal sanction—a scheme not suggested by others, or imposed upon us, but one the work of ourselves, the creation of our own intellect and of our own free, unbiassed and untrammelled will.

I should like to see our best men go there, and endeavor to have this measure carried through the Imperial Parliament—going into Her Majesty’s presence, and by their manner, if not actually by their speech, saying:

“During Your Majesty’s reign we have had Responsible Government conceded to us; we have administered it for nearly a quarter of a century, during which we have under it doubled our population and more than quadrupled our trade. The small colonies which your ancestors could scarcely see on the map have grown into great communities. A great danger has arisen in our near neighbourhood. Over our homes a cloud hangs, dark and heavy. We do not know when it may burst. With our own strength we are not able to combat against the storm, what we can do, we will do cheerfully and loyally. But we want time to grow—we want more people to fill our country, more industrious families of men to develop our resources—we want to increase our prosperity—we want more extended trade and commerce—we want more land tilled—more men established through our wastes and wildernesses. We of the British North American Provinces want to be joined together, that if danger comes, we can support each other in the day of trial. We come to Your Majesty, who have given us liberty, to give us unity, that we may preserve and perpetuate our freedom; and whatsoever Charter, in the wisdom of Your Majesty and of Your Parliament, you give us, we shall loyally obey and fulfil it as long as it is the pleasure of Your Majesty and Your Successors to maintain the connection between Great Britain and these Colonies.”

(The hon. gentleman then sat down amid prolonged cheers.)





True North in
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The Macdonald-Laurier Institute fills a gap in Canada's democratic infrastructure by focusing our work on the full range of issues that fall under Ottawa's jurisdiction.

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is an important source of fact and opinion for so many, including me. Everything they tackle is accomplished in great depth and furthers the public policy debate in Canada. Happy Anniversary, this is but the beginning.

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In its mere five years of existence, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, under the erudite Brian Lee Crowley's vibrant leadership, has, through its various publications and public events, forged a reputation for brilliance and originality in areas of vital concern to Canadians: from all aspects of the economy to health care reform, aboriginal affairs, justice, and national security.

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Intelligent and informed debate contributes to a stronger, healthier and more competitive Canadian society. In five short years the Macdonald-Laurier Institute has emerged as a significant and respected voice in the shaping of public policy. On a wide range of issues important to our country's future, Brian Lee Crowley and his team are making a difference.

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