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MORRIS

Speech in the Legislative Assembly

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HARVARD

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SPEECH

ON THE

CONFEDERATION OF THE PROVINCES.

3/23/46
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MR. MORRIS said—Mr. SPEAKER, the member for Lambton has, I think, set a good example, and I shall endeavor if it be possible to follow it. I desire to state at the outset that this, as has been well observed by many who have spoken upon the subject, is no new question; but that in one phase or another, as was very properly stated in the narrative given to the House by the honorable member for Montreal West, it has been before the people of this country from time to time for many years past. It is not my intention to follow that honorable gentleman in his interesting narrative of the history of this question, but I desire to ask the attention of the House to the fact that this is the third time that this question has been formally brought before Parliament by the Government of this country. The first occasion was, I believe, in 1858, when the then Governor General, in closing the session of Parliament for that year, used in the Speech from the Throne the following words:—"I propose, in the course of the recess, to communicate with Her Majesty's Government and with the government of the sister colonies, on another matter of very great importance. I am desirous of inviting them to discuss with us the principles on which a bond of a federal character uniting the provinces of British North America may, perhaps, hereafter be practicable." That formal statement was followed by the despatch which has been referred to frequently in this House and during this debate, and which was made the basis of the motion laid before the House last session by the honorable member for South Oxford—which motion has had the effect of causing present and, as I believe, future great results. (Hear, hear.) I be-

lieve the appointment of the committee moved for by that honorable gentleman will be looked back to as an era in the history of this country. (Hear, hear.) Now, as to the second occasion on which this question was formally brought before the attention of the House and country, we have heard from those who object to this scheme, that the people of the country have been taken by surprise, that they do not understand it, and that they are not prepared to discuss it. I would ask, sir, in reference to that, if this present Government was not formed on the very basis and understanding that it would bring about a settlement of this question, and if the people of the country did not know this to be the fact? I hold in my hand the basis upon which the Government was formed, in which the following is stated as the result of a long negotiation between the leading members of it:—

The Government are prepared to pledge themselves to bring in a measure next session, for the purpose of removing existing difficulties by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-West territory to be incorporated into the same system of Government.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Hear, hear!

MR. MORRIS—I trust the honorable gentleman will say "Hear, hear," with the same emphasis when I read the next paragraph:—

And the Government will seek, by sending representatives to the Lower Provinces, and to England, to secure the assent of those interests which are beyond the control of our own legislation to such a measure as may enable all British

North America to be united under a general legislature based upon the Federal principle.

This, sir, was the pledge given to this House and country by the present Government on its formation. It was pledged to introduce the Federative system into the Government of Canada, with special provisions for the incorporation into this Federation of the Maritime Provinces, and it was also pledged to send delegates to those provinces and invite them to join us in this Federation. (Hear, hear.) And yet we are told forsooth that these delegates, who were thus appointed in conformity with the pledge of the Government, were "a self-constituted junta,"—we were told that they had no authority for their action in the face of the distinct obligation resting upon the Government to send delegates to those provinces and to England with a view of bringing about this Confederation. No self-constituted junta were those delegates who framed these resolutions; but they met in accordance with a pledge given by this Government, and must be held to have been called together with the sanction of the Parliament of Canada, because Parliament gave the Government, formed to effect the Federation, its confidence. They met also with the sanction of the Imperial Government, as now appears from statements and despatches in possession of this House. (Hear, hear.) But coming now to the present aspect of the matter, I feel that this country has reason to be satisfied with a scheme of so practical a nature as that now under the consideration of the House. I believe that the plan of union proposed will be found to meet the exigencies of our local position, give latitude to local development, and due protection to local interests, and yet secure that general control which is essentially necessary for the proper government of a country placed under the dominion of the British Crown. (Hear, hear.) And while I thus look upon the plan, I desire to state emphatically and clearly that it is no new principle that the people of this country and the members of this House are asked to give their sanction to. The question of colonial union, in one shape or another, is one that has engaged the attention of high intellects and able statesmen in England; and I think I will be able to show to the House that the very principle we are now endeavoring to introduce as a principle of government in these British North American Provinces, is one that has received the sanction of eminent men in England, and more than that, the sanction of a solemn act of the Imperial Parliament.

(Hear, hear.) I will go back a few years, when the condition of the Australian colonies rendered it necessary for the statesmen of Great Britain to endeavor to find a practical solution of the difficulty of governing those great and growing dependencies of the British Crown. What was the practical mode adopted when events made it necessary that they should form a new Constitution for the more perfect government of those colonies? Why, the Imperial Government revived an old committee of the Privy Council, called the "Committee on Trade and Foreign Plantations," and referred the question to it, calling in to its aid, as new members of the committee, Lord CAMPBELL, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Sir JAMES STEPHEN and Sir EDWARD RYAN. The result of the deliberations of that committee was a report in which the eminent men who composed it recommended the formation of a general assembly, to which the control of the general affairs of the Australian colonies should be entrusted, with local governments having local jurisdiction and certain defined powers granted to them. I hold in my hands a series of letters on the colonial policy of England, addressed by Earl GREY to Lord JOHN RUSSELL, which contain the report of the committee of the Privy Council that I have referred to, and I find that the plan there suggested is analogous to the one we are now asked to give practical effect to in this country. (Hear, hear.) The proposition of the committee was that there should be a Governor General to administer the affairs of the Australian colonies, and that he should convene a body, to be called the General Assembly of Australia, on receiving a request to that effect from two or more of the Australian legislatures; and it was recommended that this General Assembly, so convened, should have the power to make laws respecting the imposition of duties on imports and exports, the post office, the formation of roads, canals and railways, and a variety of other subjects. The advantages of this plan were so manifest, as uniting those colonies together and securing for them a better and more satisfactory form of government than they had before enjoyed, that the report was at once adopted by the Privy Council, embodied in a bill and submitted to Parliament. The bill passed the House of Commons and reached the House of Lords; but while before that body the two clauses which introduced into the government of the Australian colonies the same system that in effect it is proposed to

introduce here were dropped, and why? Not because of any change of opinion on the part of the Government on the question, nor because the House of Lords was opposed to the principle, but because it was found on examination that they were liable to practical objections, to obviate which amendments would have to be introduced which there were no means of arranging without further communications with the colonies. The Imperial Government would not make these changes in the measure without the consent of the colonies, but Earl GREY by no means changed his mind in regard to the advantages to be derived from the plan proposed, as the following extract from one of his despatches, written in 1850, to the Governor of New South Wales, will show:—

I am not, however, the less persuaded that the want of some such central authority to regulate matters of common importance to the Australian colonies will be felt, and probably at a very early period; but when this want is so felt, it will of itself suggest the means by which it may be met. The several legislatures will, it is true, be unable at once to give the necessary authority to a General Assembly, because the legislative power of each is confined of necessity within its territorial limits; but if two or more of these legislatures should find that there are objects of common interest for which it is expedient to create such an authority, they will have it in their power, if they can settle the terms of an arrangement for the purpose, to pass acts for giving effect to it, with clauses suspending their operation until Parliament shall have supplied the authority that is wanting. By such acts the extent and objects of the powers which they are prepared to delegate to such a body might be defined and limited with precision, and there can be little doubt that Parliament, when applied to in order to give effect to an arrangement so agreed upon, would readily consent to do so.

Some may say, Mr. SPEAKER, that this is very true, but that the British Government dropped the plan and did not proceed with it. I think I shall be prepared to meet that argument, and show that it only rested in the plan to learn the wishes of the people of the colonies; for you find it following the very same principle, reported upon favorably by the Committee on Trade and Foreign Plantations, in the Constitution which was subsequently granted to the New Zealand provinces. In 1852, the plan suggested by that committee, in regard to Australia, was carried into effect in New Zealand, and it must be remembered that at that time the population of New Zealand was very small, so small indeed that one cannot help contrasting the position of that

country with that of British North America at the present day; but the statesmen of Great Britain looked into the future of the colony, and they decided that it would be advisable to confer on it powers analogous to those now sought for by us. The New Zealand Constitutional Act created six provinces, with superintendents, provincial councils of nine appointed by the governor, and a general government of three estates. In the debate on that bill, Earl GREY said that this was the only form of government which could be conferred on a colony situated as that one was. He remarked:—

It was impracticable and must for many years continue to be so, for any general legislature to meet all the wants of so many separate settlements at a great distance from each other; hence it seemed absolutely necessary to constitute provincial legislatures on which a great portion of the public business must devolve.

The very difficulty which was met with there is the one we have to overcome here. It was found absolutely necessary to create in every province a Local Legislature, and in addition one central power, to whom matters common to all might be referred. Earl GREY, in the course of the same debate, speaking of the importance of this arrangement, said:—“There were some subjects on which extensive inconvenience would arise, if uniformity of legislation among the several provinces were not insured, which could only be accomplished by a General Legislature.” And that, sir, is what this Government now asks us to adopt. They ask us to invite the Imperial Parliament to create for us provincial legislatures, to whom shall be referred all local matters, and that we shall have a General Legislature for the care of those subjects of a general character which could not be so well looked after by the provincial legislatures. And I say, sir, that finding as we do that this is no new question, we can, therefore, understand why this measure met with such ready approval from the statesmen of Britain and the high commendation of Her Majesty by her advisers. (Hear, hear.) But, Mr. SPEAKER, I will now pass from the consideration of the history of this important movement—and I assure you that I feel the difficulty of addressing the House on this subject, in consequence of the sense I entertain of the gravity of the question itself and the momentous character of the issues it involves. The subject, sir, is one of the very highest importance. The destinies of this great country are bound up in it. (Hear, hear.) The

Upper House has already sanctioned the scheme, and I would take the opportunity of remarking that I do not think that the members of that House can be rightly charged with not having given it that deliberate consideration which its importance demands. I think that they have shown a very proper example in their discussion of the question, and one that we may well follow. They debated with leisure, deliberation, and a thorough appreciation of its gravity, day by day, during four weeks, and I therefore think that the members of the Upper House ought not to have been charged with "indecent haste."

HON. J. S. MACDONALD—Who said so?

MR. MORRIS—The honorable member from Cornwall was one of those who said so.

HON. J. S. MACDONALD—I said it was unsuitable haste.

MR. MORRIS—I have somewhat of a recording memory, and I think the words he unfortunately used were "indecent haste." However, I have no intention of disputing with my honorable friend as to the particular words he used. I have only to express my opinion that the time which has been already spent on this question here and elsewhere has not been lost. I think it is our duty to consider this subject in all its aspects, and believing as I do that the scheme will be adopted by this House, I feel the importance of a full and free discussion, in order that its merits may be put before the country. (Hear, hear.) MR. SPEAKER, I desire now to state that I support the proposal at present under our consideration, because in my honest and deliberate judgment I believe that this union, if accomplished, is calculated in its practical effects to bind us more closely to Britain than we could be bound by any other system. (Hear, hear.)

A VOICE—It would put an end to the connection.

MR. MORRIS—An honorable member says "it would put an end to the connection." Well, I would say to that honorable gentleman and this House, that in my opinion there are but two destinies before us. We have either to rise into strength and wealth and power by means of this union, under the sheltering protection of Britain, or we must be absorbed by the great power beside us. (Hear, hear.) I believe that that is the only conclusion we can arrive at.

A VOICE—But the people are against it.

MR. MORRIS—An honorable gentleman says the people are not in favor of a Federal union. But we know on the contrary, that

the people are in favor of the change. When the public mind is excited against any measure, is there not a means open to the people to make known their opposition, and how is it that the table of this House is not covered with petitions against the scheme, if it is so unpopular as honorable gentlemen would have us believe?

AN HON. MEMBER—There are no petitions for it.

MR. MORRIS—An honorable gentleman says "there are no petitions for it." And why is it that there are not? Is it not because the Government was constituted on the basis of union? (Hear, hear.) The people, through a vast majority of their representatives in this House, are in favor of it. If they are opposed to it they have the remedy in their own hands, they have the means of opposing, but they do not oppose it because they feel that a change of some kind is absolutely essential, and they have confidence in the wisdom of those entrusted with the destiny of the country in this crisis of its history. But I say that the great reason why this scheme has taken the hold that it has done upon the public men of the province, is that they see in it an earnest desire to perpetuate British connection.

HON. MR. HOLTON—It will turn out a delusion.

MR. MORRIS—I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I am willing to place my prediction against that of the honorable gentleman who says it will be a delusion. (Hear, hear.) A fear has been expressed that the Confederation will lead to the severance of those links which bind us to the Mother Country. But I believe it will be our own fault if the ties between us are broken. With entire freedom and the right of self-government in the fullest sense of the word, together with the great advantage of an improved position, and the strength and power of Great Britain to foster and protect us, why should we seek to change our connection, what object could we have to induce us to form other ties? (Hear, hear.) What have we to envy in the position of the neighboring country, burdened as it is with the heavy load of taxation arising from the cruel war raging there, that we should covet that flag? Why then should our coming together for the purpose of union weaken our position or diminish the tie that links us to Britain? It will be for honorable gentlemen who do not believe that the union of these scattered colonies will give them strength, to prove that,

contrary to all precedent, union is not strength. (Hear, hear.) But I will state why this union is calculated to prolong our connection with Britain. It is well known that there has been an entire and radical change of late in the colonial policy of England. That policy has been to extend to us the utmost liberty in our relations to the Empire. What is after all the nature of the bond which links us to Great Britain, apart from our allegiance and loyalty? What is it but a Federative bond? That is what links us to Britain, and I feel quite satisfied, in the words of an English publicist of some eminence, that "the new colonial policy is calculated to prolong the connection of the colonies with the Mother Country." I believe it will raise these provinces as part of the British Empire, and so secure to us the permanency of British institutions, and bind us more closely to the Crown. (Hear, hear.) I believe it will, in the words of that far-seeing statesman, Lord DURHAM, "raise up to the North American colonist a nationality of his own by elevating those small and unimportant communities into a society having some objects of national importance, and give these inhabitants a country which they will be unwilling to see absorbed into that of their powerful neighbors." And, sir, our neighbors so see it. Shortly after the visit of the Duke of NEWCASTLE to this country, attention was directed to the question of the union of the colonies, not only in this country, but in England and in the United States. The *New York Courier and Inquirer*, in an article published at that time, came to the conclusion "that the union would, in fact, be an argument for a continuance of the existing relations between the two countries as a matter of policy and gratitude, and that such a change of government could be met with no objection of any weight." (Hear, hear.) I invite the attention of the honorable member for Chateauguay to that statement. But, Mr. SPEAKER, it is a singular study, looking back over the history of the past, to see how this question has come up in the experience of the various colonies. Before the American revolution, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN suggested a plan for a Federation of the old colonies of Britain on this continent, which, he afterwards said, would, according to his deliberate opinion, have prevented the severance of the connection between the colonies and the Mother Country. I will quote a passage written by him after the revolution, in which he makes allusion to this project. He said:—

I proposed and drew up a plan for the union of

all the colonies under one government, so far as might be necessary for defence and other important general purposes. By my plan, the General Government was to be administered by a President-General, appointed and supported by the Crown, and a General Council, to be chosen by the representatives of the people of the several colonies, met in the respective assemblies. The plan was agreed to in Congress, but the assemblies of the provinces did not adopt it, as they thought there was too much prerogative in it, and in England it was judged to have too much of the democratic. The different and contrary reasons of dislike to my plan made me suspect that it was really the true medium, and I am still of opinion it would have been happy for both sides if it had been adopted. The colonies so united would have been strong enough to have defended themselves; there would then have been no need of troops from England; of course the subsequent pretext for taxing America, and also the bloody contest it occasioned, would have been avoided.

It is singular that nearly a hundred years ago, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, looking at the difficulties then existing between the colonies, should have suggested a plan of union similar to that now proposed to us, and it is a strong proof of the wisdom of the plan now before this House, that seeing the difficulties under which the other colonies labored for want of a central power, just as we now see them, proposing this Confederation, he should have declared that if such a plan had been adopted then it would have prevented the severance of the British connection.

HON. MR. HOLTON—This scheme is looked upon as equal to independence.

MR. MORRIS—Is that the opinion of the honorable member? I think that far different views prevail in Britain. In 1858, when British Columbia was erected into a colony, it was found then that the Commons of Britain had no intention of surrendering the fair possessions of Britain on this continent, and Her Majesty was advised to say:—

Her Majesty hopes that the new colony in the Pacific may be but one step in the career of steady progress, by which Her Majesty's dominions in North America may ultimately be peopled in an unbroken chain from the Atlantic to the Pacific by a loyal, industrious population of subjects of the British Crown.

(Hear, hear.) I say, sir, that there is no evidence whatever that the statesmen of Britain look upon this great scheme as involving the severance of our connection with the Empire; but these utterances, as read here the other night by the honorable member from Montreal Centre, prove directly the contrary. If breaking off from the Mother

Country were its tendency, then I, for one, would not support it, nor would it be supported by any of those honorable gentlemen who so strongly advocate it. I am not afraid to say that any government which dared to bring down such a measure would be hurled from their places. (Hear, hear.) But, Mr. SPEAKER, I have been led into the discussion of this question of connection with the Mother Country at much greater length than I had intended, by the suggestions of hon. members, and I will take the liberty of calling the attention of the House to a passage from a work I have already referred to, and in which we find an exposition of the policy which governed the administration of Lord JOHN RUSSELL. I find there an elaborate argument to prove that the colonies are an advantage to Britain, and that Britain of course is an advantage to the colonies; and on the mere ground of material interest, if there were no other—if deeper and stronger ties did not exist as they do—I feel satisfied that this country would not be prepared to take the first step towards the severance of our connection with England, and the loss of that prestige and power which go with every British subject to every civilized part of the globe, enabling him to say, like the old Roman, "I am a British citizen." EARL GREY states that:—

The possession of a number of steady and faithful allies, in various quarters of the globe, will surely be admitted to add greatly to the strength of any nation; while no alliance between independent states can be so close and intimate as the connection which unites the colonies to the United Kingdom as parts of the Great British Empire. Nor ought it to be forgotten, that the power of a nation does not depend merely on the amount of physical force it can command, but rests, in no small degree, upon opinion and moral influence. In this respect British power would be diminished by the loss of our colonies, to a degree which it would be difficult to estimate.

Passing on a little, we find him saying:—

To the latter [*i. e.* the colonists] it is no doubt of far greater importance than to the former, because, while still forming comparatively small and weak communities, they enjoy, in return for their allegiance to the British Crown, all the security and consideration which belongs to them as members of one of the most powerful states in the world. No foreign power ventures to attack or interfere with the smallest of them, while every colonist carries with him to the remotest quarters of the globe which he may visit, in trading or other pursuits, that protection which the character of a British subject everywhere confers.

(Hear, hear.) But to view the subject in another aspect. I believe it will be found that all the conditions are combined in the scheme now before us, that are considered necessary for the formation of a permanent basis of a Federative union. I hold in my hand a book of some note on *Representative Government*, by JOHN STUART MILL, and I find that he lays down three conditions as applicable to the union of independent states, and which, by parity of reasoning, are applicable to provinces which seek to have a closer alliance with each other, and also, thereby, a closer alliance with the Mother Country. The conditions he lays down are first,—

That there should be a sufficient amount of mutual sympathy among the populations.

And he states that the sympathies which they should have in common should be—

Those of race, language, religion, and, above all, of political institutions, as conducing most to a feeling of identity of political interest.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Hear, hear.

MR. MORRIS—We possess that strong tie of mutual sympathy in a high degree. We have the same systems of government, and the same political institutions. We are part of the same great Empire, and that is the real tie which will bind us together in future time. The second condition laid down is:—

That the separate states be not so powerful as to be able to rely for protection against foreign encroachment on their individual strength.

That is a condition which applies most forcibly in our case. (Hear, hear.) The third condition is:—

That there be not a very marked inequality of strength among the several contracting states.

HON. MR. DORION—Hear, hear.

MR. MORRIS—Allow me to proceed with the extract:—

They cannot, indeed, be exactly equal in resources; in all federations there will be a gradation of power among the members; some will be more populous, rich, and civilized than others. There is a wide difference in wealth between New York and Rhode Island.

Just as there is between Canada and Prince Edward Island. I trust I have satisfied my hon. friend from Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. DORION), that Mr. MILL'S views are entirely applicable to our position. (Hear, hear.) I now proceed to state my belief that we will find great advantages in the future, in

the possession of a strong Central Government and local or municipal parliaments, such as are proposed for our adoption. I believe the scheme will be found in fact and in practice—by its combination of the better features of the American system with those of the British Constitution—to have very great practical advantages. I shall read an extract from an article in the *London Times*, written in 1858, bearing on this subject, and which brings very clearly into view the distinction between the system which has been proposed for our adoption, and that which has been adopted in the States. The great weakness of the American system has lain in the fact that the several states, on entering the union, claimed independent jurisdiction; that they demitted to the Central Government certain powers, and that they claimed equal and sovereign powers with regard to everything not so delegated and demitted. The weaknesses and difficulties of that system have been avoided in the project now before us, and we have the central power with defined and sovereign powers, and the local parliaments with their defined and delegated powers, but subordinated to the central power. The article says:—

It is quite clear that the Federal Constitution of the United States of America forms a precedent which cannot possibly be followed in its principles or details by the united colonies, so long as they remain part of the dominions of the Imperial Crown. The principle of the American Federation is, that each is a sovereign state, which consents to delegate to a central authority a portion of its sovereign power, leaving the remainder which is not so delegated absolute and intact in its own hands. This is not the position of the colonies, each of which, instead of being an isolated sovereign state, is an integral part of the British Empire. They cannot delegate their sovereign authority to a central government, because they do not possess the sovereign authority to delegate. The only alternative as it seems to us would be to adopt a course exactly the contrary of that which the United States adopted, and instead of taking for their motto *E Pluribus Unum*, to invert it by saying *In Uno Plura*.

(Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. HOLTON—What are you reading from?

MR. MORRIS—From the *London Times*, and I quote the article on account of the force of the remarks themselves, apart from the standing of the journal in which they appear:—

The first steps towards a Federation of the American Colonies would thus be to form them all into one state, to give that state a completely organized government, and then to delegate to each of the colonies out of which that great state is formed, such powers of local government as may be thought necessary, reserving to the Central Government all such powers as are not expressly delegated. The Government of New Zealand forms a precedent well worthy the attention of those who are undertaking this arduous negotiation.

And I cannot doubt that the framers of this Constitution have studied the precedent as well of the proposed Constitution of Australia, as that of the Constitution of New Zealand which has been in use for ten years past.

HON. MR. HOLTON—How does it work?

MR. MORRIS—I have not been there—(laughter)—but I know that from a small population of 26,000 in all the New Zealand provinces when that Constitution was given them, they have risen in ten years to a population of 250,000—indicating certainly growth and progress.

HON. MR. HOLTON—As we have grown in spite of that terribly bad union you wish to do away with.

MR. MORRIS—True, we have grown and progressed under the present union. But the hon. gentleman knows the heart-burnings we have had in the past. I have not been in Parliament so long as that honorable gentleman. But I recollect, when I first took a seat in this House, the state of excitement which then prevailed, and which continued, making government practically impossible. For we had governments maintaining themselves session after session by majorities of one or two—shewing that it was impossible for any government to conduct public affairs with that dignity and success with which a government ought to conduct them. But, as I have stated, I think the Conference has been exceedingly happy in the plan they have submitted for our adoption. A community of British freemen as we are, deliberately surveying our past as well as our present position, and looking forward to our future, we in effect resolve that we will adhere to the protection of the British Crown; that we will tell the GOLDWIN SMITH school—these who are crying out for cutting off the colonies—that we will cling to the old Mother Land—(hear, hear)—we desire to maintain our connection; we have no desire to withdraw

ourselves from that protection we have so long enjoyed; but we desire, while remaining under that protection, to do all that lies in our power for our self-defence, and for the development of all the great interests which Providence has committed to our trust; and we seek at the hands of the British Parliament such legislation as will enable us to accomplish these great ends for the whole of British America. (Hear, hear.) Why, what a domain do we possess! We have over three millions of square miles of territory—large enough, certainly, for the expansion of the races which inhabit this country; and our desire is, in the language of a late colonial minister—language which, I believe, well expresses the views and sentiments of the people of all these provinces—we would approach the British people, the British Government, and our Sovereign, with this language: “We desire, by your aid, with your sanction and permission, to attempt to add another community of Christian freemen to those by which Great Britain confides the records of her Empire, not to pyramids and obelisks, but to states and communities, whose history will be written in her language.” That was the language of the Colonial Secretary, Sir BULWER LYTON, when he proposed and carried out the setting off of a new colony on the Pacific shore—language certainly which indicated a firm and sure reliance in the power and efficacy of British institutions—that these institutions would be found capable of all the expansion requisite to meet the circumstances of a new country, and of any body of British freemen to whom the care of these institutions may be entrusted. (Hear, hear.) But I fear I have been tempted to forget the excellent example of my honorable friend from Lambton. (Cries of “No, no,” “go on.”) I desire very briefly to notice two or three immediate advantages which, in my judgment, would be derived from the consummation, under one central power with local municipal parliaments, of a union of the Canadas with the Maritime Provinces. Let us glance at what is their position, in relation to the great military power which is rising on the other side of the lines. Let us see what they are thinking of us there. One of their eminent statesmen suggested some years ago, that they should cultivate our acquaintance, while we were still “incurious of our destiny.” But we have passed that state. We have become curious

of our destiny, and are seeking, as far as we can, to place it on a sure and certain basis. (Hear, hear.) Here is the view taken of our position by an American writer:—

They have now no comprehensive power that embraces the interests of all—that acts on the prosperity of the seacoast and interior—of commerce and agriculture where they are seemingly rivals—that gives uniformity in tariffs and taxes, and the encouragement that shall be entrusted to the fishing, mining and other great interests.

That is a view of the position of these provinces to which I commend to the attention of my hon. friends from Chateaugay and Hochelaga. I ask, is it not a correct view? Is not that the position in which we have long been? And I believe the result of this union will be to do away with that state of things. (Hear, hear.) I believe that when these colonies are combined, acting in concert, and quickened and invigorated by a feeling of mutual dependence and interest, the tendency will be to increase their wealth and manufactures, and general strength. And, sir, I am satisfied one of the great advantages of this union will be found in this that we will be raised above our sectionalisms, and come to feel and to act as the citizens of a great country, with destinies committed to us such as may well evoke the energies of a great people. But I desire to point out another practical advantage which, I think, is of no mean or slight moment; and it is this:—Bound as we are to England, by the closest ties, and yet enjoying our own government, England is still compelled to act for us in all matters of an international nature. But, when we have for all these British provinces one General Government, able to take an oversight of the whole, and to attend to all their various interests, we will be able to represent to Britain on behalf of the whole, with a force and power we have never before been able to use, what these interests are; we will be able to press them home on the attention of British statesmen in such a manner as will lead them to appreciate, and seek to protect those interests in their negotiations with foreign powers. I would allude, as an illustration of what I mean, to the Reciprocity Treaty, and I cannot refrain from reading a very striking extract from a report presented to the United States House of Representatives, in 1862, from the Committee of Commerce on the Reciprocity Treaty. I ask the attention

of the House to this extract, as shewing how the United States have been able to take advantage of our isolated condition—our want of central power and authority—to gain for themselves advantages in the negotiation of that treaty, such as they could not have obtained or even sought, had we been in a position to present all the advantages, in negotiations with the United States, which Canada and the Maritime Provinces as a whole could present. Instead of the American statesmen having to negotiate with the separate governments of separate provinces, they would have to negotiate with the combined interests of British North America. I read this extract as a very striking one, and as entitled, on account of the source from which it comes, to some weight. In the report I have referred to, the natural results of the treaty and of its abrogation are thus spoken of:—

A great and mutually beneficial increase in our commerce with Canada was the natural and primary result of the treaty. Many causes of irritation were removed, and a large accession to our trade was acquired, through the treaty, with the Maritime Provinces. Arguments founded upon the results of the treaty as a whole, with the various provinces, have a valid and incontrovertible application against the unconditional and complete abrogation of the treaty, so far as it refers to provinces against which no complaint is made. The isolated and disconnected condition of the various governments of these provinces to each other, and the absence of their real responsibility to any common centre, are little understood. No fault is found with the acts of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These separate provinces and that of Canada have each a separate tariff and legislature, and neither of them is accountable to or for any other. An abrogation of the treaty, as a whole, would therefore be a breach of good faith towards the other provinces, even if it were expedient to adopt such a course towards Canada, but no advantages gained by the treaty with the Maritime Provinces can be admitted as offsets in favor of Canada. Each province made its own bargain, and gave and received its separate equivalent.

(Hear, hear.) This is an instance of some moment, and I believe the same principles will be found to apply to all those questions on which, in the future history of this Confederation, it will be found necessary to confer with foreign governments, through the Mother Country. No longer detached and isolated from each other, we will be able to present a combined front, and to urge the advantages which may

be derived from the exhaustless fisheries of the Lower Provinces, as well as those afforded by Canada. (Hear, hear.) The defence question has been alluded to very frequently in this debate. I think there really cannot be a question that it would be for the advantage, not only of Britain, but of each one of these provinces, that on such subjects as the militia, and on all kindred questions, such as those relating to aliens, the observance of neutrality and like subjects, there should be a general and uniform action; that, seeing the action of any one of the colonies might involve the parent state in war, there should not be separate and distinct action, but one uniform action, on all that class of national and international subjects, throughout the whole of the British Provinces. I cannot help thinking that in practice an immense advantage would be derived from the introduction of such a system. It is not my *forte*, as that of some hon. gentlemen, to speak with regard to the defence question. There are other hon. members who understand that subject thoroughly, and will no doubt deal with it in a satisfactory manner. But I cannot help thinking that a uniform system of militia and marine for British North America would be powerfully felt in the history of this continent.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Are we to have a navy?

MR. MORRIS—The hon. gentleman no doubt listened with interest to the speech of the President of the Council, and he might have learned from that, that we had a navy of which any country might be proud, devoted to the pursuits of honest industry, and which causes us to rank even in our infancy as the third maritime power in the world. And should the time of need come—as I trust it never may—I am satisfied that in the Gulf, on the St. Lawrence, and on the lakes, there would be enough of bold men and brave hearts to man that navy. (Hear, hear.) I would further remark, that under the proposed system, local interests would be much better cared for. I am satisfied the local interests of all the separate provinces would be better cared for, if their legislatures were divested of those large subjects of general interest which now absorb—and necessarily so—so much of our time and attention. (Hear, hear.) I will now only mention briefly one or two incidental advantages which I believe will be found to accrue in the future from our position as

united provinces of the British Empire. I will not at this late hour of the night, as I see the House is wearied—(cries of “No, no,” “Go on.”)—I will not quote any figures to shew the extent of intercolonial trade that will spring up with the Maritime Provinces and with the West India provinces. Some years ago there was, as mercantile men well know, a large trade conducted with the West India Islands, which, from various circumstances, has almost entirely ceased. I believe that, when the provinces are united, not only will a large trade spring up in those agricultural and other products which are now supplied to the Lower Provinces from the United States, but a trade will also be established with the West India Islands. Some time ago I took the trouble to look into the figures, and I was surprised to find how large a trade was conducted twenty-five years ago with those islands; and I believe that, by carrying out this union, we will have facilities for establishing such commercial relations as will lead to the reopening of that valuable trade.

HON. MR. HOLTON—You should bring in the West India Islands also.

MR. MORRIS—The hon. gentleman is very anxious to extend the Confederation. (Laughter.) I have known him for long years as a Federalist, and I believe he is only sorry that we do not go a little faster. I am satisfied that when Confederation is accomplished, he will be one of its most hearty supporters. (Hear, hear.) I would now, MR. SPEAKER, desire to quote a few words from a lecture delivered some years ago by Principal DAWSON, of Montreal, a well-known Nova Scotian, and who is distinguished for his thorough acquaintance with the Maritime Provinces. He says:—

Their progress in population and wealth is slow, in comparison with that of Western America, though equal to the average of that of the American Union, and more rapid than that of the older states. Their agriculture is rapidly improving, manufacturing and mining enterprises are extending themselves, and railways are being built to connect them with the more inland parts of the continent. Like Great Britain, they possess important minerals in which the neighboring parts of the continent are deficient, and enjoy the utmost facilities for commercial pursuits. Ultimately, therefore, they must have with the United States, Canada and the fur countries, the same commercial relations that Britain maintains with western, central, and northern Europe. Above all, they form the great natural oceanic termination of the great valley of the St. Lawrence; and

although its commerce has hitherto, by the skill and industry of its neighbours, been drawn across the natural barrier which Providence has placed between it and the seaports of the United States, it must ultimately take its natural channel; and then not only will the cities on the St. Lawrence be united by the strongest common interests, but they will be bound to Acadia by ties more close than any merely political union. The great thoroughfares to the rich lands and noble scenery of the west, and thence to the sea-breezes and salt-water of the Atlantic, and to the great seats of industry and art in the old world, will pass along the St. Lawrence, and through the Lower Provinces. The surplus agricultural produce of Canada will find its nearest consumers among the miners, shipwrights, mariners, and fishermen of Acadia; and they will send back the treasures of their mines and of their sea. This ultimate fusion of all the populations extending along this great river, valley and estuary, and the establishment throughout its course of one of the principal streams of American commerce, seems in the nature of things inevitable; and there is already a large field for the profitable employment of laborers and capital in accelerating this desirable result.

Such, I believe, MR. SPEAKER, will be found to be the results of the steps now being taken. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, I would desire to call attention to the advantages we will enjoy in consequence of our being able to do something to secure the development of the immense tract of country lying beyond us—Central British North America, popularly known as the Great North West. If Canadians are to stand still and allow American energy and enterprise to press on as it is doing towards that country, the inevitable result must be that that great section of territory will be taken possession of by the citizens of the neighboring states. The question is one of great interest to the people of Canada. Years ago Canadian industry pushed its way up the valley of the Ottawa to the Great North West. In 1798 the North-West Company had in its employment not less than 12,000 persons; and there is no reason in the world why the trade which was then carried on should not be reestablished between the North-West and Canada. No insuperable obstacles stand in the way. A practicable route exists which can be used by land and by water, and there is no reason why the necessary steps should not be taken to secure the development of the resources of that country and making them tributary to Canada. (Hear, hear.) I think it was a wise foresight on the part of the gentlemen

who prepared the plan now before us, that they laid this down as one of the principal features of the scheme—that they regarded the development of the North-West as necessary for the security and the promotion of the best interests of British North America. (Hear, hear.) If the House will bear with me, Mr. SPEAKER, I would ask hon. members to consider for a moment the extent of the territory there possessed. An American writer, who estimates it at 2,500,000 square miles, puts it in this way:—

How large is that? It is fifteen and a half times larger than the State of California; about thirty-eight times as large as the State of New York; nearly twice as large as the thirty-one States of the Union; and, if we omit the territory of Nebraska, as large as all our states and territories combined.

Between the settled portions of Canada and the Red River country, there are areas of arable land, ranging from 200,000 acres downwards, with facilities for opening up communication by land and water; and I do not wonder that the late Sir GEORGE SIMPSON, while making his celebrated journey round the world, in passing from Montreal to Red River, and thence overland to the Pacific, should be struck with the extraordinary advantages of this country, and that on one occasion, when surveying the magnificent expanse of inland lake and river navigation, in the midst of a fertile country, he should exclaim—

Is it too much for the eye of philanthropy to discern through the vista of futurity this noble stream, connecting, as it does, the fertile shores of two spacious lakes, with crowded steamboats on its bosom, and populous towns on its borders?

(Applause.) Sir GEORGE SIMPSON was not a man likely to be carried away by mere impulse; but viewing the prospect before him, he could not refrain from breaking forth in the glowing language I have quoted. Then glance for a moment at the Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine and the Red River country, with the Red River settlement of 10,000 people, forming the nucleus for a future province—a nucleus around which immigration could be drawn so as to build up in that distant region a powerful section of the Confederation. It is a country which embraces 360,000 square miles, and the Red River, Lake Winnipeg, and the Saskatchewan afford a navigable

water line of 1,400 miles. And what is the character of the country? On this point I would quote Professor HIND, who describes the valley of the Red River and a large portion of the country on its affluent, the Assiniboine, as “a paradise of fertility.” He could speak of it in no other terms “than of astonishment and admiration.” He adds that as an agricultural country the character of the soil could not be surpassed, affirming in proof of this assertion:—

That all kinds of farm produce common in Canada succeed admirably in the District of Assiniboia, and that as an agricultural country it will one day rank among the most distinguished.

Nor are there any difficulties of climate. If any hon. member will take the trouble to examine that excellent work in our library, *Blodgett's Climatology*, he will find it stated as having been “demonstrated that the climate of the North-West coast, and of the interior towards Lake Winnipeg, is quite the reverse of that experienced in the same latitude on the Atlantic, and is highly favorable to occupation and settlement.” (Hear, hear.) Mr. SPEAKER, I desire now to place before the House the extent of the territory we possess in the Atlantic and Pacific Provinces. The Atlantic Provinces comprise Canada East, with an area of 201,989 square miles; Canada West, 148,832; New Brunswick, 27,700; Nova Scotia, 18,746; Prince Edward Island, 2,134; Newfoundland, 35,913—together 435,314 square miles, to which add the territory of Labrador, 5,000 miles, making a grand total of 440,314 square miles, embracing a population of something like 4,000,000 of souls. The Pacific Provinces are British Columbia, containing 200,000 square miles, and Vancouver's Island, with 12,000 square miles; and there is the territory of Hudson's Bay (including Central British North America), with 2,700,000 square miles. (Hear, hear.) I desire now, sir, to thank the House for the patience with which hon. members have listened to my remarks. I rose at a late hour in the evening, and seeing that the House was wearied when I commenced, I did not wish to prolong the debate. I have thus shortened very much the remarks I intended to offer, and have treated only hurriedly and casually on many points which might have engaged further attention under other circumstances. I desire to express my confident opinion, before closing, that

this great scheme is not one which ought to be factiously met. For if ever there was a plan submitted to any legislature which deserved to be treated with an avoidance of party feeling, it is this. (Hear, hear.) It is evident that in the House there are a large majority in favor of the plan, and while it is their duty to concede to the minority—what is the right of the minority—the opportunity of stating their objections to it, it is, on the other hand, an evidence of the strongest kind that the majority, in supporting this measure, believe they are doing the best for their country, and that it is a measure which meets the popular sanction and approval, when they avow by their own act their readiness to return to the people for their approval of the steps they have thought proper to take. (Hear, hear.) It is the duty of those who are in favor of the scheme—and I believe there are a very large majority who see in it advantages of the most substantial kind—I am firmly persuaded that it is a duty they owe to those who sent them to th's House, it is a duty they owe to the country, it is a duty they owe to the great empire of which we form a part, to bring this scheme to a speedy consummation. I am glad, sir, in taking a retrospect of the three eventful years during which I have had a seat in this House, to reflect that on the first occasion I had the honor of addressing the House, in 1861, I declared myself in favor of an analogous scheme to that we are now discussing; that I then expressed myself in favor of a general government of the British North American Provinces, with separate local legislatures, in the following terms, when speaking of the question of representation by population :—

He had confidence that men would be found able to meet the question fairly and to come down with a measure satisfactory to the country. It might be that that measure would be one which would bring together the different provinces of British North America into a union, formed on such a basis as would give to the people of each province the right to manage their own internal affairs, while at the same time the whole should provide for the management of matters of common concern, so as to secure the consolidation of the Britannic power on this continent.

I have held this opinion ever since I have had the capacity of thinking of the destiny of this country, and I would beg to be allowed further to quote language I used in 1859. Reviewing at that time, as I have

done hurriedly to-night, the extent of our possessions, and the great advantages we would be able to obtain by the union now proposed to be carried into effect, I spoke as follows, in a lecture on the Hudson Bay and Pacific territory, delivered in Montreal :

With two powerful colonies on the Pacific, with another or more in the region between Canada and the Rocky Mountains, with a railway and a telegraph linking the Atlantic with the Pacific, and our inland and ocean channels of trade becoming a great thoroughfare of travel and of commerce, who can doubt of the reality and the accuracy of the vision which rises distinctly and clearly defined before us, as the great Britannic Empire of the North stands out in all its grandeur, and in all the brilliancy of its magnificent future! Some hard matter-of-fact thinker, some keen utilitarian, some plodding man of business, may point the finger of scorn at us and deem all this but an empty shadow—but the fleeting fantasy of a dreamer. Be it so. Time is a worker of miracles—ay, and of sober realities, too; but when we look east and west and north; when we cause the goodly band of the north-men from Acadia, and Canada, and the North-West, and the Columbia, and the Britain of the Pacific, to defile before us, who are the masters of so vast a territory, of a heritage of such surpassing value; and when we remember the rapid rise into greatness, as one of the powers of the earth, of the former American colonies, and look back over their progress, who can doubt of the future of these British Provinces, or of the entire and palpable reality of that vision which rises so grandly before us of this Great British Empire of the North—of that new English-speaking nation which will at one and no distant day people all this northern continent—a Russia, as has been well said, it may be, but yet an English Russia, with free institutions, with high civilization, and entire freedom of speech and thought—with its face to the south and its back to the pole, with its right and left resting on the Atlantic and the Pacific, and with the telegraph and the iron road connecting the two oceans?

(Applause.) Such, Mr. SPEAKER, is the vision which is present to myself and to many others who, like myself, whether in Upper or Lower Canada, are "to the manor born," and whose all and whose destiny is here. I know and feel, and am assured that if the people of these British Provinces are but true to themselves, and if the statesmen of Britain now act aright their part in this great crisis of our national history, this vision will be realized. We will have the pride to belong to a great country still attached to the Crown of Great Britain, but in which, notwithstanding, we shall have entire freedom of action and the blessings of responsible

self-government; and I am satisfied we will see as the results of this union all that we could possibly imagine as its fruits. (Hear, hear.) Thanking the House for their kind attention, I have only to say further, that I believe the plan under which we seek to ask the Parliament of Great Britain to legislate

for us is a wise and judicious one, and which not only deserves, but which I am confident will receive, the hearty support of the representatives and of the people of this province, and to which I, for one, shall feel it my duty to give my warmest and most cordial sanction. (Loud cheers.)