

years ago. They were told, however, that this position was altogether untenable.

The old disturber. "Hear, hear." (Cries of "shut up," "fire him out.")

Mr. McNeill said they were told that they should be prepared to state accurately the details of the particular form of confederation that would be brought about; that they had no right to advocate closer union. Their critics told them that unless they were so prepared they (the critics) were entitled to assume that the whole thing was a mere poetic fancy and altogether unworkable. Fortunately, however, for the Empire and fortunately for mankind, this theory of the critics was altogether vain and foreign to the facts, because this thing which the critics said was unrealizable was a thing which could not only be brought about but a thing which, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, was "being accomplished at this very moment by leaps and jumps." (Applause.)

The man with the trouble on his mind again rose in the front seat, and was greeted with yells of "sit down," "turn him out," "order," and such like. Evidently determined, however, to interfere with the harmony and enthusiasm of the meeting, he remained on his seat, and in a voice which was audible only to the reporters sitting beside him, he called for "facts."

When quiet again reigned Mr. McNeill proceeded with his address. He said that it was useless for these critics to endeavor to persuade the people of this country that a better organization and closer union of the Empire was impossible while this better organization and closer union was at the very moment being brought about with marvellous rapidity. It was only in 1884 that the Imperial Federation League came into existence, and to-day what did they find? They found that the young life of Imperial unity was throbbing throughout every member of the Empire. (Loud applause.) They found that the oneness of the Empire was already being recognized by the summons of the great Imperial consolidative assembly of representatives from all parts of the Empire. They found that the great Imperial conference had already taken up and dealt with the difficult and dangerous question of the New Hebrides. It had changed the whole course of the English policy with reference to that matter. Was not that a fact? Was it not a result? But they found furthermore that this great Imperial conference had taken up and dealt with the great overshadowing question of the closer union and better organization of the military and naval forces of the Empire on a common basis for the purposes of mutual defence. Was that not a fact? As a result of thus dealing with the question they found the Mother Country agreeing to provide a fleet of war ships for Australian waters, and the

Australian people agreeing to sustain, maintain and keep that fleet of war ships which the Mother Country had thus provided. What was all that he would like to ask if it was not a closer union; if it was not a consolidation of the Empire; if it was not a one result of the very things which the Imperial Federation League existed to bring about? It was indeed consultation, consolidation and concerted action among the different members of the Empire. (Loud applause.) The question he would ask them was "did they approve of this confederation?" (Cheers.) "Were they in favor of this Imperial Conference?" (Renewed cheering.) "Where they in favor of organizing for mutual defence?" (Tremendous cheering.) When the question of mutual defence was taken up by the Imperial Conference it was agreed that the Canadian people by the establishment of a military college at Kingston, by the construction of the Intercolonial railway and the C.P.R., and by the organization of the militia forces had done their fair share towards the defence of the Empire. (Cheers.) He ventured to say that he expressed the sentiments of the audience when he said that if the integrity of the Empire was threatened or the honor of the British race assailed in any portion of the Empire, no people would be willing to make greater sacrifices—more substantial sacrifices—than would the people of Canada to maintain that Empire intact, and to preserve British honor inviolate. (Tremendous cheering.) If they approved of the consolidation of the Empire, of Imperial unity, of the decision of the Imperial Conference, of the purchase by the Mother Country of a fleet for the Australian waters, to be maintained by the Australian people. If they endorsed all of those, he implored them to give their adhesion to the Imperial Federation movement, which was instrumental in bringing them about. (Loud cheers.) He would advise them not to be afraid of shocking the over-sensitive loyalty of some critics of the scheme; of two evils choose the least. (Applause.) It was, he was quite sure, very painful to some of those gentlemen to witness the coarse, vulgar exhibition of the sentiment which they themselves prized so highly, and guarded so zealously and held so sacredly that no one let him look ever so minutely could ever chance to get the slightest glimpse of it about either their persons or premises. (Loud cheers.) It was, of course, to any kind-hearted man a painful thing to cause discomfort, but where duty called they must obey—(applause)—and after all the preservation of our Empire was even more important than the soothing of those too delicate sensibilities. (Hear, hear.) And then it should be remembered that those gentlemen were able to close their eyes and shut their ears against those too coarse