

# THE BULLFROG.

Nec sumit aut ponit securus.  
Arbitrio popularis aures.—Hor.

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## ENGLAND, CANADA, AND THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

A careful study of the rise, progress, and downfall of the Federation Scheme, cannot fail to impress dispassionate thinkers with a sense of misgiving as to the working of Responsible Government in young, thinly populated Colonies. Responsible Government cannot, after all, be regarded save as a mere haublé—a plaything granted us by an indulgent parent in order to keep us quiet. When England gave us self government, she did so merely to gratify a whim on our part: she regarded the North American Colonies as poor relations whom she was in honor bound to support at any terms consistent with her own peace and quietness. But England did not take the trouble to consider that, in giving us liberty to play at Lords and Commons, she was granting something which we could not in principle carry out. So long as all went smoothly English statesmen were only too glad to let us settle our own affairs in any way we thought proper, provided we did not take up the time of the House of Commons. But beyond this, neither the Home Government nor the British people ever considered us as independent as we came to consider ourselves, and from the tone of the English press it is clear that our individuality as a Province is a thing never practically considered across the Atlantic. The possession of Canada adds something to the prestige of England, and the possession of Halifax adds materially to her conveniences, but beyond this, comparatively little is known of the several portions of British North America. It was, therefore, most natural that the proposal of *Canada* to consolidate British Empire in the West should have been regarded by English statesmen with unqualified approval; but, at the same time, it is not difficult to perceive that Englishmen all but ignore the existence of the Lower Provinces. When it was officially announced that *Canada* was in favor of Union, the English mind saw only the magnitude of the scheme, and never paused to reflect upon the probable consequences resulting from the working of Responsible Government in the smaller colonies. Englishmen cannot, at the present moment, comprehend that there is in Provinces such as Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, any necessity whatever for liberals and conservatives, black rods, and speakers, and all the cumbrous machinery of mock Lords and Commons. Nor is this at all strange—for who can repress a smile while thinking of such matters in connection with a population of 300,000? Hear what the *Times* says upon this subject:

"We had given all that was useful for self government; we supplemented our gift by adding what was merely ornamental. We gave to colonies Responsible Government, founded on the pattern of Responsible Parliamentary Government in England. That is, in countries thinly peopled, with no rich educated class, with no class possessing at once sufficient leisure and sufficient intelligence to attend to politics with any beneficial results, we made Departmental offices that demanded from their holders industry, punctuality, knowledge of business, and strict honesty, the prizes of a spurious Parliamentary eloquence, and a genuine Parliamentary jobbing. \* \* \* Life—the life of a large, bustling, active, and irritable class, is engrossed by the mutual struggles of office-hunters and office-holders; and these struggles go on under circumstances at once so lamentable and so ludicrous that we can hardly realize them in our conceptions." The conceptions of Englishmen cannot, we imagine, realize anything "at once so lamentable and so ludicrous" as the position now occupied by the delegates from the Maritime Provinces. How any men of ordinary sagacity could have had the hardihood to present themselves before the Imperial Government as the representatives of a people on a question which the people had never heard discussed, is a matter certainly beyond the

conception of ordinary Englishmen. What will the Imperial Government think of the workings of Responsible Government in these Provinces, when it appears that not even a coalition of the leaders of parties in any way reflects public opinion upon a scheme signed and sealed in the name of the people? We await England's verdict upon this point with considerable interest. The fact of the matter is—we are in a false position. We govern ourselves, and yet neither the English people nor the English press attach any importance to the fact. *Canada*, and *Canada* only, has the ear of the British public, and no man knows this better than Lord MOSCK. Whether we read his despatches or the English newspapers we find *Canada* only considered. (This seems a real hardship when we come to consider that but a few short years ago the master minds of Europe were awe-struck while contemplating our gigantic "column of coal.") It is impossible to study the blue book upon "Union of the Colonies" without noting the *ex cathedra* tone of *Canada* throughout the whole discussion. It is obvious that the Canadian statesmen knew their strength and that their course of action had been resolved upon before they ever met the delegates from the Maritime Provinces, formally or informally. Their "wish" is first put forth in a few words as possible, "I have the honor to inform you that it is the wish of the Canadian Government to send a Delegation to attend the Conference." Then, we have the Canadian Committee hinting at the great advantages to be derived from the presence of Canadians among the statesmen of the Lower Provinces: "they consider that very great advantage will flow from the opportunity that will be then afforded of considering the practicability of uniting under one Government the respective Provinces, and should it be found that a reasonable prospect exists of such an Union being practicable, the Committee consider that it would be possible, &c., &c." The Canadians, having effectually killed of the scheme planned by the Lower Provinces in their several Assemblies—(if it were deemed necessary that the appointment of delegates to consider the lesser Union should rest with the House of Assembly, why was not the latter reassembled to consider the appointment of delegates authorized to consider the larger Union)—now take the lead, and "have the honor to advise and submit, that the several Governments be invited to appoint Delegates, &c., &c."

If we turn to the English press we find its columns teeming with allusions to *Canada*, and *Canada* only. In another place our readers will find an article extracted from the *Saturday Review* which altogether ignores the existence of any independence among the Maritime Provinces. "It is at any rate certain that the Conference which sat at Quebec was assembled by the express invitation of the Governor General of *Canada* acting, of course, with the fullest sanction of his superiors." Again:—"Lord MOSCK's speech at the opening of the Provincial Parliament does full justice to the most momentous question which the Canadians have ever had to decide for themselves." It is tolerably clear that the *Saturday Review*, in common with the *Times* and most of the leading English journals, argues the question of Federation as though no interests other than those of the Canadians could possibly be at stake—indeed, the following passage seems to imply that should British pressure be deemed advisable, it may possibly assume the form of coercion. "There has never, since the report of the Conference was published, been much doubt that all the Provincial Legislatures would ratify the work of their leading statesmen; and now that an American fleet may be looked for upon the Lakes, and that American custom-house officers will soon block up all the roads of commercial intercourse, any lingering hesitation as to the expediency of Union must be effectually banished from the Colonial mind." We do not, of course, for one instant suppose that England would treat lightly the opposition of the Lower Provinces, but we can