

ing his acknowledgments on behalf of her Majesty's Ministers and for himself, he proceeded to say that among the whole range of British politics, he knew of no subject of such deep and engrossing interest as the field of Colonial politics. He referred to the great prosperity of the British North American Provinces, and the material advantages of which their inhabitants were so ready to avail themselves. He was very glad to have the pleasure of meeting that evening so many representatives of the great American colonies. Those gentlemen had come to this country to discuss one of the most important questions that could well be imagined—the most important, probably, that had ever been considered in British North America. That question was, however, not altogether a new one, for it had been for many years discussed in one shape or another. It was entertained during the early part of the century by many distinguished colonists. It was subsequently referred to by Lord Durham when he, in that able report, recommended the legislative union of the two Canadas, and in which he also further contemplated the union of the maritime provinces. We had delegates from those colonies in England, who had come to this country for the purpose of consulting with her Majesty's Government as to the best means of consolidating those colonial interests. In 1853 he had the pleasure, in consequence of his connection with the Colonial Office, of making the acquaintance, which he had at present still greater pleasure in renewing, with many of those gentlemen who had come here as delegates from their respective provinces. From various causes that question then came to no practical issue, but it had now been revived in a most practical form. He regretted to see that there were no delegates present from Canada that evening, but only the representatives of the two maritime provinces. The Canadian delegates had been delayed in coming to this country by various causes, and their absence was as unintentional as it was unavoidable. (Hear, hear.) He was ready to bear his testimony to the patience and temper with which the other delegates had submitted to the inconvenience caused by the absence of their colleagues, but in consequence of the absence of one-third of the delegates it had as yet been found impossible to deal with the question, and it had not, down to the present time, come under the official consideration of her Majesty's Government. When it did come under their consideration, there would no doubt be many questions to be determined, many interests to be weighed, and some differences of opinion to be reconciled. He believed that in the meantime it would be premature on his part to express any opinion on the subject, but although his lips were sealed on this point, he could undertake heartily to welcome those representatives of the North American colonies who were then among them, and he was also free, on the part of her Majesty's Government, to promise an earnest and respectful attention to everything which those gentlemen might urge when they came to consider the question. (Cheers.) He promised that they would find no lukewarmness, no indifference to their wishes, and no want of interest or confidence in their national aspirations. He believed that whatever might be the issue of their councils, they would present a picture unparalleled, as far as he knew, to the history of any country, that of a mother country discussing frankly and freely with her colonies great constitutional changes desired by them without one particle of jealousy or distrust on the part of the mother country (hear, hear, and with the most earnest loyalty and affection to that country on the part of the colonists). (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN proposed the toast of the evening, "The guests—the delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick." He regretted very much the absence of the representatives of Canada, which was a real loss, but it was inevitable and arose from circumstances beyond their control. He hoped, however, that their arrival in this country would bring about the union between the provinces which had been so long desired, and meanwhile, he asked the company to join him in heartily welcoming the guests from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and coupled with the toast the names of Dr. Tupper, Mr. Tilley, Mr. Archibald, and Mr. Chandler.

The Hon. Dr. TUPPER, Premier of Nova Scotia, rose to respond. He said he thought he should be able to show the meeting that the question of Confederation of the B. N. A. Colonies was not only of vital importance to those Colonies, but to the British Empire at large. At a distance of little more than a week's steaming lay Nova Scotia, with an area of more than 18,000 square miles—an invigorating climate, a fertile soil, immense coal-fields, and mines rich in iron, gold and other minerals. To the west of Nova Scotia lay New Brunswick, covering an area of some 27,000 square miles of excellent land, with forests of invaluable timber, intersected by the splendid river St. John, emptying into a noble harbour of the same name. Behind New Brunswick again, they came to the great colony of Canada, with an area of 330,000 square miles, celebrated as a wheat-producing country, affording an ample field for the sustenance of many millions of the human family. When they were told that under the restrictive influence of separate governments, hostile tariffs, and diverse currencies Nova Scotia, with all the natural resources it possessed, had but a population of 350,000, and was without railway communication even with the adjoining province; that New Brunswick, with its trade crippled, cramped and confined by the Custom-houses of Nova Scotia on one side, and of Canada on the other, had but 250,000 inhabitants, and that Canada, with all its prosperity, was without direct access to the ocean for five months in the year, and had to depend during that period upon a railway through a foreign, if not a rival State for her postal communications with the mother country, although the construction of 400 miles of railway from Truro, in Nova Scotia, to Rivière du Loup in Canada would complete an unbroken line of railway from Halifax, on the Atlantic, to Sarnia, at the foot of Lake Huron—some 1400 miles,—when these facts were laid before them, they would not be sur-

prised to learn that the representatives of all these colonies met together at Quebec, upon the invitation of the Governor-General of Canada, in 1861, to inquire when the best interest of all could be promoted by uniting them under one government and legislation. The common accord which was arrived at by that conference was brought about not merely by the prospect of some commercial advantages, but also by the influence of a common danger. The changing state of affairs on the continent of America warned them to adopt such measures as would not only enable them to co-operate better for the support of each other, but also to ask more confidently the aid of the parent state. They had heard a great deal of Fenianism, but, in his opinion, a greater danger to British America existed in the desire of the people of the United States to obtain possession of these colonies. It was not merely the consideration that the colonists should aid them in bearing their present burdens, but the desire to avoid the inconvenience and the contract afforded by the free-trade policy in British America, which was being steadily built up in opposition to the protection system in operation in the United States, that led the people of that country to wish for the annexation of the colonies. Confederation would at once give, by the construction of a link of 400 miles of railway, an unbroken rail from Halifax to Lake Huron. To the west of Canada lay the great Red River and Saskatchewan country, and 1000 miles of rail would carry them from the western shores of Lake Superior through Columbia to Vancouver, on the Pacific, and open up a great highway to China and Japan across the portion of the American continent now owned by Great Britain, and equal in extent to the whole area of the United States, and through a country as fertile and possessing as good a climate as any portion of the globe. But there was another not unimportant feature of this question. British America, possessed of priceless fisheries, now owned 9,000 vessels, representing more than a million tons. Could Britain, which claimed a proud pre-eminence as mistress of the seas, afford to see not only the entire continent of America held by one power, but the already formidable marine of the United States increased by such an acquisition as this. The hon. gentleman went on to say that he might be asked whether British North America could be defended. He believed it could. Its four millions of people could produce from four to six hundred thousand men to protect their common soil, and with easy and rapid intercommunication from one end of the country to the other by rail, and the support which their own exertions warranted them in asking from the mother country, he thought that once united, they would not only avoid defeat, but be secured from any attack. He was convinced that had confederation been accepted by the Maritime Provinces when first proposed in 1861, the Reciprocity Treaty would not have been abrogated, nor would the Fenians have been mad enough to attempt an invasion; and he would be surprised if twelve months after the consummation of confederation did not bring the American Government consenting for a renewal of the Treaty. To the question whether the people of the colonies desired this union, he would answer most emphatically they did, and he was prepared to give the fullest evidence on that point. In Canada, all parties and classes were so united on this point, that when it was proposed that the union should not be consummated until it had been referred to the people at the polls, only nineteen members could be found to vote to that effect. In New Brunswick, where the people were hostile before the question was understood, an appeal to them a year later resulted in the return of 33 members pledged to confederation, and but a light in the whole province opposed to it. In the Legislature of Nova Scotia, which well represented the education, intelligence, wealth and industry of the country, the resolution in favour of confederation was carried in the Assembly by a majority of 31 to 19, and in the Legislative Council by 13 to 6. He was therefore warranted in saying that this great change in their institutions would not only unite them in the bonds of security and prosperity, binding them still closer to the parent state, but would obtain the cordial concurrence of the great body of the people of British North America.

Hon. Mr. TILLEY was the next speaker. He said that was not the first time he met the Association. He was in England in 1861 when it was formed. In that year the delegates from British America sought assistance from the Imperial Government towards the construction of the Intercolonial Railway to the extent of £60,000 per annum, one half the interest of the estimated cost. In this effort they failed. In 1862 the colonies undertook its construction, assuming all the cost, and simply asked the guarantee of the Imperial Government for the sum necessary to build the road. He would not soon forget the interest that was shown at that time by the members of this association in the object of that mission, and the satisfaction manifested by them when the Government acceded to the request of the delegation. Circumstances, to which he need not refer, had prevented the commencement of that important work, and one of the reasons why he, in common with a large majority of the people of the Maritime Provinces, was so anxious to secure the union of the British North American Provinces was that there now appeared no other way of securing its early construction. In a paper presented to the Imperial Government by the delegates in 1861, it was shown that for the defence of those provinces this road was an absolute necessity, with it, troops could be thrown into Canada from England in ten days, without it, communication could readily be cut off with Canada, and the result could not be other than disastrous; with this railway completed, the colonies, aided by the British Government, could hold their ground should unhappily any difficulties occur with their American neighbours or with any other power. (Hear, hear.) Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick had, after mature deliberation, decided that it was their interest to be united. The Canadian delegates would soon be in London, and he had not yet abandoned the hope of having delegates from Newfoundland and Prince

Edward Island upon the meeting of Parliament, authorized to confer with the Imperial Government upon the terms of their admission. From the unofficial interviews had with members of the Government, and discussions with members of Parliament of all shades of politics since their arrival in England, he had no doubt that if the delegates themselves agreed upon a policy, all parties in this country would meet them more than half way,—would, indeed, give them their cordial support. (Hear, hear.) He had assured that the delegates would agree, and he had no feeling but that of entire confidence in the early consummation of the proposed union. (Cheers.)

Hon. Mr. ARCHIBALD also responded. He said that there were many lessons which might be learnt from the history of the United States, and there was one which ought to have been learnt long ago,—the effect of striking down the barriers which, before the revolution, obstructed the development of their trade and commerce. While the thirteen provinces were divided from each other by hostile tariffs, by antagonistic policies, by jealous rivalries, their trade was hampered as is that of the British North American provinces now. But the moment a new constitution made the thirteen States one country, their progress was most rapid. The inhabitants of the provinces might long since have taken a lesson from this, and might have seen that their system impeded largely the development of their country. But the question was now not one that depended on commercial considerations. It had passed from the domain of a commercial question to one of political necessity. The moment that thirty millions of our neighbours had changed their national character—the moment that they ceased to be farmers, and miners, and manufacturers and mechanics, and had become one of the greatest military powers in the world, our position was entirely changed and the provinces must either confederate or be swallowed up in the great American republic. The people of the provinces had no desire to be absorbed. It was their wish to retain the connection with this country, and they hoped to find in the confederation they were seeking such a modification of their institutions as would most certainly assure their safety and their progress—as would place side by side with the democracy of the United States the more tempered liberty of British institutions. (Loud cheers.)

The Hon. Mr. CHANDLER, an independent member of the Legislative Council of New Brunswick, also returned thanks. He felt a peculiar degree of satisfaction in doing so, because circumstances necessitated his almost immediate return to the British North American provinces, and he would be able to report that the delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had been received with marked attention; and the feeling of her Majesty's Government, as well as of the Opposition, was with them, and that, all things considered, they might fairly consider their reception as an earnest of success in the great enterprise they had in hand. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN, in highly complimentary terms, proposed "The Governor-General of Canada and the Lieutenant-Governors of her Majesty's colonies," coupling with the toast the name of Governor Hinks of British Guiana.

Governor HINKS, who was received with loud cheers, said he felt a difficulty in saying a word on the important subject which had gathered them together, after the able and enthusiastic speeches they had listened to. But as an old resident in Canada, he could remember when the legislative union between Upper and Lower Canada was much less likely than the proposed Confederation. How well that had worked for the two countries they all knew, and he was sure that the gentlemen who had accepted the deep responsibility of promoting the federation of all our colonies would weigh well all the difficulties in the case and provide for a due representation and balancing of all interests. He could himself appropriately support such a measure, because the colony of which he was Governor was, in fact, an amalgamation of the three colonies. (Hear.) If he might be permitted to offer one word it was this—that there was a constant tendency on the part of the statesmen and the press of Great Britain to utter remarks to the effect that they were willing, most willing, to have the connection between England and her colonies terminated. Now, Canada would never separate from Great Britain by the unanimous wish of her inhabitants. If she ever separated it would be by the act of a party, they would be opposed by another party, and the separation would not take place without bloodshed. There was a party in British America—a party passionately attached to republican principles—which wished to overthrow monarchy in Canada and unite the country to the United States. It was a great mistake for Englishmen to give countenance to a party of this kind, and by so doing increase the difficulties caused to the loyal people of Canada by the lawless marauders that were now threatening its frontiers. (Cheers.)

Mr. WATKIN, M. P., proposed "The health of the Executive of the Colonial Office, coupling with the toast the names of Sir Frederick Rogers and Mr. Blackwood, to whose far-sighted knowledge and constant industry he attributed the maintenance in so friendly a spirit of the good understanding between the colonies and the mother country.

Sir Frederick ROGERS briefly returned thanks. The health of the Chairman was then proposed to which he briefly expressed his acknowledgments, saying that he regarded the confederation of the British North American Provinces as now an almost *fait accompli*.

The last toast, proposed by the Hon. Mr. TUPPER, was "The health of the President, Vice-President and Council of the British North American Association," connected with the names of Mr. Benson and Mr. Gillespie.

These gentlemen having responded, The company almost immediately afterwards retired to the drawing-room to partake of tea, and separated about eleven o'clock, well pleased with the evening's gratifying proceedings.