

for the purpose of breaking up the union of the two Canadas, and merging them separately in a larger confederation of the British American provinces. After a considerable amount of preliminary negotiation, matters were sufficiently advanced in 1866 to admit of delegates being appointed from the different provinces to confer on the terms of confederation. The delegates met in London, and the result of their deliberations was the British North America Act, passed by the Imperial Parliament, 29th March, 1867. On the first of July in that year a proclamation of the Queen ushered the young confederacy into existence; and the waste of gunpowder, the destruction of maple branches, the display of dry goods in bunting and fashionable attire, showed it to be a festival on which the Canadians kept high holiday. Since that time the First of July—Dominion Day as it is called—has formed, among the Canadians, a rival to the great holiday of the Fourth among their American neighbors. Whether the day will hold its place or not, who can tell? The explosion of tons of gunpowder in pyrotechnic exhibitions, and *feux de joie*, and salvoes of artillery, will not make the baptism of fire by which a people announces that it has been born into the family of the nations.

At the formation of the confederacy it embraced only four provinces—Upper Canada, under the new name of *Ontario*; Lower Canada, under that of *Quebec*; Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, under their old names. Since then the provinces of Prince Edward Island in the east, and of British Columbia in the west, have joined the Dominion; while the 'Great Lone Land' in the north-west has been acquired by buying up the rights of the Hudson's Bay Company, and already a portion of it set apart as the Province of Manitoba. The whole of British North America is thus included in the Dominion, with the exception of Newfoundland, which thus, literally and figuratively, remains out in the cold. The political constitution of the Dominion, as well as of the seven provinces which now compose it, is in all essential respects a reproduction of the British Constitution. The only exception is in the case of Ontario and Manitoba, the former having from the first contented

itself with one legislative chamber, while the latter, for economy's sake, has since followed her example. Recently a proposal has been revived to unite under one provincial government the three maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. It is to be hoped that this proposal may be carried. Neither of these provinces by itself holds the position which its people should be ambitious of attaining in the Dominion; while they entail upon themselves an enormous useless expenditure by supporting three governments, each with a paid lieutenant-governor, a paid cabinet, and two legislative bodies, whose members are paid. As one province, they might cope with Quebec or Ontario; with a single government they would have a large surplus revenue to expend in developing their natural resources; while their legislative chamber or chambers would attain a dignity which is hopeless while they attempt to invest the petty politics of a narrow sphere with the pomp of imperial ceremonies.

Such were the political arrangements with which the Canadians entered on the new attempt to solve the problems of their national life. The political outlook was certainly cheering. The old factions had forgotten their interminable struggles for office, and there seemed to be opened up to them the nobler destiny of working together, and along with their new fellow-countrymen from the other provinces, in building up a great nation along the north of the American continent. This was evidently the interpretation of the position formed by the majority of thinking men throughout Canada, and it was the interpretation on which the Government of the new Dominion began to be formed.

In the selection of a prime minister the governor-general was guided by an equally obvious and just consideration. At the conference of colonial delegates in London, by whom the details of the Confederation Act were arranged, the chair had been occupied by Sir John A. Macdonald, who had long been leader of the Conservative party in the old Province of Canada. The position to which he had thus been raised by his fellow-delegates was a fair indication of the position which he held among the public men of Canada, and the governor-gen-