

Crown pretends to no dictation, nor has it any interest at variance with the interests of the Colonists. Although in a Crown Colony the Official element is supreme, it is well understood that it is to govern, and public opinion forces it to govern—according to the well understood and well established wishes of the Colony at large. The Government can not and dare not interfere except to prevent crude, irrational, or vicious legislation. There is no direct conflict between the Mother Country and a Colony in these days; but it cannot be supposed that any British Province will submit patiently to injustice at the hands of a Canadian Ministry or a Canadian House of Commons. If any scheme has been devised more likely than another to raise and keep alive local irritation it is, in my judgment, the scheme of Confederation on the basis of the Organic Act of 1867.

What is said by Lord Granville is true in theory, but practically it is opposed to human nature; and in endeavouring to carry out elaborate and elevated views Great Britain stands a fair chance of losing the whole of British North America.

Thus far I have treated of the general policy of the Organic Act.

With respect to the applicability of the scheme of Confederation to this Colony I have no special and particular grounds of objection. I consider such an union inexpedient on several grounds.

First, the remoteness of the Colony from Canada; Secondly, the comparative insignificance of British Columbia;

And, thirdly, the diversity of its interests from those of Canada.

That these objections specially apply to the extension of the principle to this Colony no one can doubt. Lord Granville admits that the distance is an objection, but thinks that a Railway will annihilate time and space. He thinks that the Government can be carried on at a distance of 3,000 miles without difficulty. This Railway is to bridge over the vast desert that intervenes between this Colony and Ottawa. The notion that we can with any effect represent the interests of this Colony in the Parliament at Ottawa at a distance of 3,000 miles is to me absurd. With a population such as ours, even if we have the representation suggested by the terms, with eight Members of Parliament against one hundred and eighty-two, and four senators against seventy-two, how can it be supposed to be possible that our voices could be heard? When Lord Granville spoke of "comprehensiveness" and "impartiality" in a Legislature, surely he must have lost sight of the constituent elements of a House of Commons. For let us consider, without any reflection upon the House of Commons at Ottawa, what is the nature of the House of Commons of England, or of any other assembly of the same nature. Every House of Commons is but an assemblage of the Members of Parliament pledged to support the material interests of their constituents, whenever these interests are affected. I never can anticipate anything but the representation of the views and the material interests of constituents in any House of Commons. I believe that members would always vote according to the interests of men whose votes they would have again to solicit, and of whose interests public opinion holds them to be the acknowledged advocates.

How can we find eight men in a place like this, where at all events the most valuable members of society are professional and business men, without selecting them from a class who are politicians by profession? Most men here are workers of some sort, not actively employed in their several professions and businesses, and we should have extreme difficulty in finding eight good men who would spare the time and expense to go to Ottawa. What we should want would be such men as are now at Ottawa, the principal business men, bankers, merchants, and professional men; but time and space will prevent this most valuable class of men from leaving British Columbia and representing our interests at Ottawa, and we shall be compelled either to retain the services of Canadian gentlemen who, living in Canada, would be British Columbian representatives only in name, or we should have to take eight representatives who will be content to make politics a profession, and we shall have to pay them for their services. To the insignificance of British Columbia as a Province of the Dominion the same remarks apply.

Difference of interests is a still more material point. Upon this point direct conflict is sure to arise. Canada belongs to the Atlantic, and looks to the Old World for her markets. We are a new country, our

staples are totally different. Questions cannot but arise between British Columbia and Canada—between the East and the West—in which Canadian interests will prevail over those of British Columbia; and aggravated by the feeling of wounded pride and forced insignificance, the Colonists of British Columbia will feel naturally aggrieved.

The Colonial feeling is well known—pride and attachment to the Mother Country and intense sensitiveness and tenacity where injustice or wrong is done. There let this feeling be raised amongst us and it will not be long before British Columbia is clamorous for repeal; and not obtaining it, the Country will be ripe for any other change, however violent.

Now, Sir, with respect to the third head of my objections. With respect to the mode in which the consent of this Colony is attempted to be obtained, I am sorry to notice what I cannot but call a spirit of diplomacy, and a spirit of management, characterizing the whole movement in favour of Confederation on the part of the Imperial Government. It is obvious throughout that the Imperial Government desires to obtain their end and aim of Confederation in a mercantile spirit of bargain and sale, which jars upon my feelings of right and justice.

If this Council is properly the Legislature of British Columbia; if we reflect the intelligence, the substance, and the interests of the Colony, we ought to have originated these Resolutions ourselves. The matter should have arisen spontaneously amongst us, without any attempt at leading or forcing. What may be His Excellency's own views upon the subject of Confederation we cannot tell. I look upon Lord Granville's despatch as a diplomatic order, couched in polite language, but nevertheless a requirement to the Governor to carry out the will of the Colonial Office, without reference to his own convictions. All that we are told by His Excellency upon this subject is that the Colony will derive "material benefit" from Confederation, and the Colony has been offered by the Executive certain material benefits in the shape of a Railway, a Dock, cash in hand, and freedom from debt, in return for the transfer of all legislation to the Dominion of Canada. These "material benefits" being paraded before the eyes of the Colonists, the bargain is afterwards to be accepted or refused by a Council composed mainly of Representative Members. This mode of operation, no less than the bargain itself, is equally objectionable in my eyes. The material benefits—the Dock, the Railway, the money payments—are in effect nothing more than bribes to the present generation to forego the rights of self-government.

There are no doubt that the Colony will accept the bargain. The Colony is a small one, the population not exceeding 6,500 adult white men, and of these many are gentlemen of Canadian proclivities, Canadians by birth, who are naturally, and I may say patriotically, in favour of a union with their native Country.

There are many, also, who in the present adverse condition of things in this Colony, are desirous of change of any kind, and eager for any opportunity of benefiting by operations which promise to throw population, capital, and enterprise into the Colony. We have suffered much from pecuniary depression, and when we have an offer from a great Country to come and spend money among us, can you doubt that any one will fail to feel these advantages; while many more hope for political power and influence in a system which they expect will carry with it Representative Institutions, if not Responsible Government. Can we doubt that the vote will be in favour of Confederation? The people of this Country will sell themselves for the consideration of the present, and posterity will hereafter ask indignantly what right had we to shackle them, and to deprive them of rights which cannot be sold.

We shall reap the benefit, and those that come after us will reap the disadvantage and humiliation. It is not in the power of the present generation to dispose of the birthright of its descendants. Liberty and self-government are inalienable rights. The right of self-government of the matter still remains, and when once the material benefits are enjoyed or forgotten, and the consciousness of disadvantage is apparent, reaction will set in; a party of repudiators and repealers will arise, who with great show of justice will clamorously demand the reversal of an organic change, founded on political error and wrong. Although our masters at Ottawa may be ever so amiable and ever so pure, the moment we feel the yoke we shall repent; it is not in the nature