

with pained surprise. The reason is known to those who have studied the history of that period. Friend of liberty as he was, broad as he was in his conceptions, for- visioned as events showed him to have been, Lord Durham himself did not appreciate the whole effect of liberal institutions. Coming to Canada at a time when the very atmosphere was reeking with rebellion, he formed a hasty judgment upon the French population of that day, which he expressed in vehement and somewhat haughty language. He thought they could not be reconciled to British rule, and stated in his report that the conditions were such that the two provinces should be united, so that French Canada should be ruled by the stern and relentless hand of an English-speaking majority. It is not to be wondered at that when the report was made known in Canada it not only caused, as I have said, pained surprise, but produced a feeling of injustice and wrong. Sir, I repeat that Lord Durham, friend of liberty as he was, did not realize the full force of free institutions, did not perceive, as other men perceived at that time — men who, on this subject, had a better conception of things than he had — that there are principles superior to race feeling, that there are principles that can unite men of all origins in a common aspiration for the welfare of their common country. Such a man was Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine; such a man was Robert Baldwin. When the provinces were united, Lafontaine, speaking of the Act of union, characterized it:

As unjust and despotic in this that it was imposed on us without our consent; in this that it deprives lower Canada of its legitimate number of representatives; in this that it deprives us of the use of our language in the proceedings of the legislature against the justice of treaties and the pledged word of the Governor General; in this that it forces us to pay against our consent, a debt which one had not contracted; in this that it allows the executive power to take illegal hold, under the name of civil list, of an enormous portion of the revenues of the country.

This was a severe arraignment, and unfortunately it was only too true, but what was the conclusion arrived at by Lafontaine? Did he say that the French Canadians should not accept the Act of union? No. Men there were at that time who immediately started an agitation for the repeal of the union, and those men were joined some years afterwards, when he came back from exile, by Pajdneau, a strong man, an eloquent man, a man of intense nature, and whom the very intensity of his nature always carried beyond the point into impracticable conclusions. La-

fontaine was a different man, he was a broad man, he understood the situation. The Act of union was not satisfactory to his fellow-countrymen, he thought it was an injustice, but he accepted it, because principles there were by which every injustice could be rectified. It is upon those principles, Mr. Speaker, that we rely. In the address which I have just read, addressed to the electors of Terrebonne, he continued as follows:

The reformers in the two provinces are an immense majority. . . . Our cause is the same. The interest of the reformers in the two provinces is to meet in the legislative ground, in the spirit of peace, of union, of unity, of fraternity. Unity of action is more than ever necessary. I have no doubt that the reformers of Upper Canada feel, as we do, the need of it, and that in the first session of the legislature, they will give us unequivocal proof of it, which, I hope, will be the pledge of a confidence both reciprocal and durable.

Sir, in these noble sentiments he found an auxiliary in that other great and true Canadian and British subject, Robert Baldwin. The confidence which he had looked for, he found; it turned out to be as he expected. It was not only reciprocal and durable. Above all it was fruitful. That policy obtained for the French-Canadians the restoration of the rights of which they had been deprived by the act of unions; it removed the dissensions, which up to that time, had rent the land; it introduced amity and concord among the different races and branches of the Canadian family; it established a permanent and ever-growing prosperity; it increased loyalty to the Crown and brought it to its highest pitch of enthusiasm and devotion; it brought up Canada, step by step, stage by stage, to the high position which it occupies at this moment; and as I said at the beginning, so I say in conclusion, this is the last and crowning effort of the policy which was then happily inaugurated. Sir, we must advance, we cannot remain stationary. We must advance. To remain stationary in this age is to retrograde; we must advance. And again on this occasion, as in the days of Lafontaine and Baldwin, we appeal to moderate men in all part of the community. We appeal as they did appeal, in a spirit of amity, of union, of fraternity; we appeal, as they appealed, in the highest conception of the duty which we owe to our country and to the mother country. It is the tradition of these great men, which is our supreme inspiration to-day in turning this page of the history of Canada.