

Confederation was to prosper. They found that it did prosper, that the country was growing in wealth and influence by rapid strides, and they were now asked to believe that all this was entirely on account of the Ministry. It may have been that the Government had done much to consolidate the union, but the Government could not have kept that prosperity back. It arose from the enterprise of the Prince Edward people, their great trade, and their extending commerce. (*Cheers.*) It might be that the Government had much to do with that, but it was equally true that no Government could remain in power whose policy did not foster and encourage the development of the country.

They were told that the policy of the Government towards Manitoba and British Columbia would be reversed if the Opposition came into power. For his part, as a member from an outlying Province, a Province which would reap no direct material benefit from the Pacific Railway, he desired to see it progressing as expeditiously as possible. He had no jealousy with regard to that matter; he did not know the opinions of the honourable gentlemen opposite on this question. In times past they might, as was alleged, have been opposed to it, but now it had been recognized by the country, and made part of the bargain with British Columbia. He had no doubt that the agreement would be faithfully preserved, in fact, it must be carried out, for it was as binding as the British America Act itself. He saw no reason for fear upon that ground.

He was of opinion that the terms granted Prince Edward Island were not so liberal as those given to Manitoba and British Columbia. He did not complain of the enormous expense in which the Pacific Railway would involve the Dominion, nor did he complain of the large amount that was spent in building the Intercolonial Railway; but he merely made this remark, that it could not be shown that the Government in any way particularly favoured Prince Edward Island.

It had been hinted that but for the Ministry of the day the terms would have been less liberal. He had looked very carefully over the papers from Canada, when that matter was pending in Parliament, and he failed to see one word which bore out that statement. He failed to observe a single motion against the terms granted, a single remark unfavourable to them. They were passed, only a very few explanations being asked. When the elections were taking place in his Province he for one had pledged himself, and he believed his *confrères* were bound by similar pledges, to hear the evidence, to weigh it, and to act according to his convictions as to what was right. He now intended to carry out that pledge. (*Loud cheers.*)

He had studied the history of the transactions as well as he could, he had heard the discussion; he had made up his mind, and he was ready to vote according to his conscience. Upon the decision that was given on this question would depend the future of the country, its intellectual progress, its political morality, and more than all, the integrity of its statesmen. (*Loud cheers.*)

Mr. HAGAR: Mr. Speaker, as I have never wearied the House with long and elaborate speeches, I trust it will bear with me while I make a few remarks. Lacking the essentials of the real debater, and

averse to public speaking, I should not at this late stage of the debate have trespassed upon the time of the House, did I not feel that the position I have occupied here, and the gravity and importance of the question now under discussion, demand from me something more than a silent vote; and, Sir, I must crave the indulgence of the House, if, in prefacing my remarks, I refer to matters personal to myself, which to me is most distasteful, but which seems necessary in order fully to explain my position.

Sir, I had the honour to occupy a seat in this House during the first Parliament of the Dominion. I came here as an independent member, and though a Liberal in sentiment, and feeling moderate in my views and anxious and willing to aid and assist the Government in every way consistent with my judgment, in perfecting and consolidating the new Confederation. To this second Parliament I was returned by acclamation, and again took my place as an independent member, a position which I am aware is looked upon with suspicion by many, ridiculed by some, sneered at by others, and by not a few considered as a notice that the occupant is for sale, to which political party may bid the highest. Sir, I deny and repudiate those imputations and insinuations, for although I grant there may be exceptions, I claim and believe the great majority of independent members of this House are as true to the convictions and their sense of duty as any class of their fellow members; and that all the fascinations of wealth, all the allurements of place and power, or the pressure of partizan supporters or constituents, could not tempt or force them to swerve from the path of rectitude and honour—and, Sir, amid this majority I claim a place.

I came here under no obligations to the Government, with no favours to ask, no ambitious longings for place or preferment to gratify, no needy friends, supporters, or relatives to provide for. Untrammelled by party feeling, and unpledged to political supporters. I did say I would not vote want of confidence where no principle was involved. I came here, not as a politician, but as a representative of the people; determined to do my duty to my constituents and the country to the best of my ability and judgment; to support measures rather than men, and with a friendly feeling towards the Government, inclined to support them in every measure that my conscience and my reason would allow. It was from this stand-point, with these feelings, and with an anxious and earnest desire that those charges might be disproved, that I have endeavoured calmly and dispassionately, unbiassed by party feelings, and unblinded by partisan zeal or prejudice, to review the facts and evidence in the case, and to arrive at an honest and just decision and, Sir, to judge intelligently of the case, it is necessary one should keep in mind all the facts bearing upon or connected therewith.

Therefore, I must refer to the action of the Government during the last session of the First Parliament, when the hon. member for Durham West introduced a Bill to assimilate the election-law for the Dominion with that, then and now prevailing in the Province of Ontario; to that Bill I gave a most hearty support, feeling that on the eve of a general election the best interests of the country required it, and that its provisions would be fair alike to both political parties;