

He did not believe our Constitution could be replaced by another as good. Some of them had been opposed to Confederation years ago because they doubted if it could be properly worked, but the moment they were defeated, in 1867, they set to work to make Confederation a success. The French Canadian Liberal party were not like the Liberals of France or the other nations of the continent of Europe—(*Hear, hear*)—who were at any time ready by violence to overturn existing Governments. They rather resembled the Liberals of England, who for so many years worked and voted for Reform, and by Constitutional means achieved the grand results which they have today. From the moment the opponents of Confederation in Canada were defeated they bowed before the majesty of the law, and frankly and readily endeavoured to advance the interests of the New Dominion to the best of their ability. This was their programme; following out the principle of respect for authority, and for the general good of the country.

He was happy to see that the first act of the Government which had lately attained office was to give a portfolio to a representative of the youngest member of the Confederation, and so carry out the principle upon which it was established.

Our Constitution was founded upon the British Constitution—the finest under which men ever lived. It assured to every man his liberty, and enabled him to exercise his constitutional rights without fear. There was nothing on this Continent to equal this great Constitution; particularly was it fitted to unite citizens of different races, nationalities and religions—a quality in which the United States Constitution had signally failed. Today there was not a man in Canada who did not support this great union, and so successful had been the welding in one of the different Provinces that every man of them was proud to be a Canadian—(*Cheers*)—while equally proud to be a subject of the great British Empire. (*Renewed cheers.*) If today there was a man among them who would seek or desire to sever this union, he would be worthy of no place in a civilized community.

He affirmed, without fear of contradiction, that we presented a spectacle of civil and religious liberty not surpassed in the whole world. We had none of those questions to trouble us which excited the passions of the people and disorganized society in European nations. By a singular coincidence, England had just passed through a general election and witnessed the opening of a new Parliament such as they were participating in today. There, however, a Liberal Government had been overthrown, while here a Conservative Administration had been defeated. In both cases the party in power had been attempting to govern the people too much.

With these few general remarks he would set himself to discuss the programs before the House. He was happy to see that it was proposed to improve our commercial facilities and increase our industrial resources, and that amongst the measures promised, those relating to commercial development occupied so prominent a place. Political reform and the amendment of the Election Law, were also promised. For a long time the Liberal party had demanded a measure of reform, which was often refused; but the Liberal party now in power was exerting itself to put in force those principles which they had so long advocated in Opposition.

One of the principal reform in this direction was the simultaneous holding of elections. According to the old system the elections were arranged to suit political exigencies. The result was corruption and violence. The law as it existed was very little better, but fortunately the present Ministry had endeavoured to extract the sting from it in this respect, and consequently he was happy to believe that the present members were really the chosen of the people. (*Cheers.*)

The Conservatives, both here and in England, had always opposed the ballot, probably because they believed that the voice of the people legitimately expressed would be adverse to them, and also on the ground that it would result in the return of demagogues to Parliament. The experience of the ballot in England, however, had shown that demagogues had been rejected, and Conservatives had met with greater success than they had anticipated. The present contested election law was so defective that it would have to be thoroughly overhauled. The constitution of the Court was so little understood that today he believed a majority of the Judges were uncertain whether they were acting constitutionally or not. It was intended to define this part with greater clearness, and to enable the provisions of the law to be carried out with greater clearness.

He preceded to allude to the establishment of a Supreme Court, which, he contended, was necessary in order to pronounce on the constitutionality of the laws which at present had to be submitted to the law officers of the Crown in England for consideration. Another important reform promised was in relation to the militia.

With regard to the Pacific Railway, it had been asserted the present Liberal Government was far more liberal than the Conservatives, but it would be found the desire to see a railway constructed to the Pacific was quite as strong as that of their predecessors. Our best railways had been constructed too much for political reasons, and without due regard to the public interest or to the necessary economy either in general expenditure or in relation to the alignment. The Government, he contended, were pursuing the proper course in relation to this matter. He referred to the American Pacific Railways, in illustration of his point, and expressed the hope that care and deliberation would be exercised in the construction of our road.

Government also promised the enlargement of our harbours and canals. The question had been before the country for some years, but the work never has been vigorously prosecuted. Under the able management of the present Minister of Public Works he had no doubt this great work would be efficiently carried out. After paying a tribute to the energy displayed by the Hon. Mr. Young in connection with this matter and pointing out that in all such great questions they must look not simply to the next few years but to the great future, he came to the question of reciprocity, which he strongly advocated, and which the people strongly approved of. He hoped that the efforts of the Commissioner now at Washington would meet with success.

He concluded by congratulating the House and the country on the character for energy, integrity and ability possessed by the present Ministry, and by expressing his belief that the laws which they would place upon the Statute Book would be beneficial to the