

place, the party went into action without discipline, without plan, and without preconcerted unity. It was composed of a miscellaneous conglomerate of persons temporarily united for one purpose, and having one grievance in common. There was no other bond which kept them together but that of opposition to the principle or the details of Confederation, and anger—very just anger—at the manner in which it had been carried into effect. Under these circumstances it was obviously necessary at once to mark out a defined line of policy, that the leaders should know exactly whither they were leading, and that the rank and file should all know the aims that were to be held in view. To the cause of Union delay was, above all things, most favourable. Time was on the side of the accomplished fact, and every month and every week that passed made it less necessary, as well as less feasible, to repeal the B. N. A. Act. The dismal vaticinations of unutterable woe and inevitable ruin in which the gloomy and partizan prophets of the Anti-confederate party had indulged, remained unfulfilled, and the consequent reaction, of course, converted many, who distrusted their leaders and despaired of their cause, to at least a tacit acquiescence in the *status quo*. The first Session at Ottawa disclosed a want of unanimity and of cohesion in the Nova Scotian ranks, of which the astute Premier took note and advantage. Repeal was not at that time even accepted as the policy of the whole party. Punishment for their opponents, and “better terms” for the Province, were rather the objects sought after. We see, too, the want of a policy pervading all the documents and manifestoes that were issued from Halifax. Even after the Government were pledged to seek Repeal, and averred that nothing short of it would satisfy them, we find resolutions and minutes of Council wandering vaguely away from the subject, mixing up “better terms” with Repeal, and moaning querulously over the inequality and injustice of

the Act which, in the same breath, they denounced as unconstitutional, and, consequently, as not binding upon them.

There seems almost to have been a half-heartedness in the cause from the very first; and looking back now on the contest, contrasting the nominal programme with the actual deeds of the Repealers, their professed intentions with the accomplished results, one sometimes doubts whether any large proportion of the party was ever thoroughly in earnest in its loud-voiced demand for the Repeal, and nothing but the Repeal, of the British North America Act.

It must, indeed, be granted that to have obtained its repeal would have been, under any circumstances, extremely difficult, although, at the same time, the Anti-confederates may be pardoned for believing—such of them as *did* believe—that the English Parliament could not but listen to and remedy the wrongs of which they complained. For, whatever the Confederate party could allege to the contrary, whatever inconsistencies they could point out between Mr. Howe’s present and past opinions, however plausible were the insinuations which they made as to the real motives of the “Antis,” and the true object of their agitation, still they could not controvert the main facts of the case. They could not deny that petitions had been very extensively signed throughout the Province, in the first place to the Lieut.-Governor, praying for a dissolution, in order that the question of union with Canada might be pronounced upon directly by the people; and, secondly, to the Imperial Parliament, praying that the Act of Union might not pass until the people had had the opportunity of so voting; or that the Lieutenant-Governor and his Ministers, and the Queen and her Ministers, had been fairly warned of the consequences of so passing the Act; nor, by any reference to the influence that side issues and local animosities had possibly exercised upon the elections, could they much lessen the weighty significance of the assertion made