

their duty to propose to Parliament a vote for defensive works at Montreal while the defence of Upper Canada, on land and on the lakes, was unprovided for. The position of affairs was further complicated by the result of the New Brunswick elections, which postponed, at least for a time, the union of the Provinces—and by the formal notice given by the American Government for the termination, in March next, of the Reciprocity Treaty. It became evident that the time had arrived and could no longer be postponed, for a full and frank explanation with Her Majesty's Government on the whole state of affairs; and with that view an immediate mission to England, with your Excellency's assent, was resolved upon. The state of the case was forthwith communicated to the Legislative Council and Assembly, which were then in session; and Parliament was shortly after prorogued on the understanding that it would be summoned to learn the result of the negotiations and complete the business of the session, so soon as the delegates returned from Great Britain.

On arriving in England we lost no time in placing ourselves in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies; and a committee of the Imperial Cabinet, consisting of His Grace the Duke of Somerset, the Right Honorable the Earl De Grey and Ripon, the Right Honorable Wm. E. Gladstone, and the Right Honorable Edward Cardwell, having been appointed to confer with us, negotiations were opened and continued at frequent interviews, up to the close of our mission.

The subject to which we first invited the attention of the Conference was the proposed Confederation of the British North American Colonies. We reminded the Imperial Ministers how largely all the questions, with the discussion of which we were charged—and especially those of defence, Foreign Commercial relations, and internal communication—would be affected by the Union, and how greatly their satisfactory settlement would be facilitated by it. We explained the reasons that existed for obtaining the assent of all the Colonies to the Union at an early date, and the promise to which the Government of Canada stood pledged to proceed without delay with Constitutional reforms for Canada alone, in the event of the larger measure failing to be obtained. We received at once from the members of the Imperial Cabinet assurances of their hearty approval of the Confederation scheme, and of their anxious desire to promote its early accomplishment, by all the legitimate influence of the Imperial Government. In the discussion of the means to be adopted for effecting Confederation, we trust it is unnecessary to assure Your Excellency that the idea of coercing the Maritime Provinces into the measure, was not for a moment entertained. The end sought was to ascertain in what manner the question of Union in all its bearings, could be best brought under the full and fair consideration of our fellow Colonists, and the grave responsibility urged upon them, which they would assume by thwarting a measure so pregnant with future prosperity to British America, so anxiously desired by the great mass of the people to be affected by it, and which had been received with such marked satisfaction by our fellow subjects throughout the British Empire. We received assurances that Her Majesty's Government would adopt every legitimate means for securing the early assent of the Maritime Provinces