

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, and negotiations were opened and continued at frequent intervals, 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 to the Union. In the course of these discussions, the question of the Intercolonial Railway came up as a necessary accompaniment of Confederation, when we sought and obtained a renewal of the promised Imperial guarantee of a loan for the construction of that work.

The important question of the future military relations between the Mother Country and *Canada* received earnest and grave consideration. Before entering on the discussion of details, we referred to the recent debates in the Imperial Parliament on the subject of Canadian Defences, and especially to the assertions confidently made by certain members of the House of Commons, that *Canada* was incapable of efficient protection against invasion from her inland border. We explained the injury such statements tended to produce, and the necessity of our ascertaining, as a preliminary step to our discussions, whether or not they were well founded. We asked that a report on the whole subject of the defence of *Canada*, with plans and estimates, might be obtained from the highest military and naval authorities of *Great Britain*. Such a report was obtained and communicated to us confidentially—and we rejoice to say that it was calculated to remove all doubt as to the security of our country, so long as the hearts of our people remain firmly attached to the British flag, and the power of *England* is wielded in our defence.

On the part of *Canada*, we expressed the desire that this plan for the defence of all parts of the Province should be taken as the basis of arrangement; and that a full and candid discussion should be had as to the share of the cost that ought to be borne respectively by the Imperial and Provincial exchequers. We expressed the earnest wish of the people of *Canada* to perpetuate the happy existing connection with *Great Britain*, and their entire willingness to contribute to the defence of the Empire their full quota, according to their ability, of men and money. But we pointed out that if war should ever unhappily arise between *England* and the *United States*, it could only be an Imperial war, on Imperial grounds—that our country alone would be exposed to the horrors of invasion—and that our exposed position far from entailing on us unusual burdens, should on the contrary secure for us the special and generous consideration of the Imperial Government. We explained, moreover, that though *Canada* continued to progress steadily and rapidly, it was a vast country, sparsely populated—that the difficulties of first settlement were hardly yet overcome—that the profits of our annual industry were to be found not in floating