

March 31, 1873

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: The motion may go. Agreed to.

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INDEPENDENCE

Mr. WALLACE (Norfolk South) rose amid laughter to move the following resolutions:

1st. That in future Canadians must look forward to attaining their full status as a people, but while doing so they are alike opposed to independence or absorption into the neighbouring Republic, and desire only to enjoy their rights as full as their fellow subjects in the British Isles.

2nd. That in return for being endowed with their full rights as subjects, the Canadian people will be prepared to assume their share of the responsibilities arising out of them.

3rd. That steam and telegraph having connected London and Ottawa so closely together as were London and Edinburgh at the time of the union between England and Scotland, there ought to be no insuperable difficulties to obtaining an object so much to be desired.

4th. That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying that the Imperial Parliament may be recommended to take into consideration the confederation of the Empire, or some other plan that will give Canadians the full rights and privileges of British subjects.

It might be said these resolutions were premature, but when the first journal in England had said to Canada take up your apprenticeship and go, it was time to consider the question of our tutelage. Independence and annexation had been spoken of, he wished none of either, nor desired severance from the parent State, and therefore he thought it better to propose some way by which Canada should become practically independent without severance from Great Britain.

Proud he was of being a Canadian, and hoped she would reach the highest pinnacle of material and moral greatness. His heart clung to his native land, yet proud as he was of being a Canadian, he was prouder far of being a Briton, as every heart that beats with proper pulse must expand with a higher and holier emotion in thinking of those who for conscience sake walked to the stake, than to those who made conquest by force of arms.

It was a boast here in Canada that if we went into the courts our judiciary were not to be bought as they were in the United States, and justice would be done to all; happily in this country we had not mixed politics with judicial appointments. Here, too, the bowie knife and revolver were unknown, and life and property were safe. Therefore he was opposed to absorption by the United States. He was also opposed to independence, as it would involve severance from Britain, a connection of which we should be proud.

He desired this House should sanction an address for confederation of the empire or some other plan that would give to this country full rights and privileges as British subjects; and if it were possible to get all English-speaking people into the confederation he would admit the Americans. (*Cries of oh, oh.*) And if we could not, then let them enjoy their republican form of government. Such a confederation would be worthy of the highest traditions of Canadians. He moved in effect that people of this country were alike opposed to absorption or independence and desired only to enjoy the full benefits of British subjects.

Mr. STAPLES seconded the motion.

Hon. Mr. TUPPER said that admirable and patriotic as were many of the sentiments contained in the resolutions submitted to this House, he trusted the hon. gentleman would be induced to withdraw them. It was only as yesterday this country underwent a great constitutional change, and it was only yesterday the ablest minds of the country were engaged in developing such a scheme of government for British America as they believed would conduce largely to its prosperity. He was proud to say that the results of the great constitutional change had not only equalled but exceeded the most sanguine anticipations indulged in reference to them. He believed those who desired the severance of the country from Great Britain were few and far between and that the people were satisfied with the Constitution it was our pride and glory to possess.

He maintained that it was to the interest of Canada to strengthen the connection between Canada and the Crown. When the time for separation came, he believed it would be by force of circumstances which would be as conducive to our interests as to the interests of the mother country. He affirmed that they, as Canadians, at present held the same position as they would if the proposed change were effected. The connection was as strong as any could exist, and was of the strongest and most enduring and exalted character. How could our status be raised by changing a connection which at present is of the highest character, and yet leaves us in the uncontrolled charge of our own affairs. He deprecated any action on the part of that House that would for a single moment create the impression in the world that Canadians were dissatisfied with the proud position they occupied.

He referred with pleasure to the rapid strides which had been made in Canada within the last five years in a financial, commercial, and political sense. He thought hon. gentlemen, instead of introducing resolutions of this description, should rather turn their attention to the consolidations and extension of those constitutions which had so largely contributed to the increase in the value of property of Canada.

Mr. De COSMOS was in favour of the reception of the motion. He did not think Canadians possessed the privileges they were entitled to. They had no voice in the Imperial Parliament and he thought it was the duty of Reformers to introduce a measure of this description. He, for one, would have liked to have seen a resolution received, asking upon what terms the Union could be