

Extract from the Speech of the Hon. T. D. McGee.—Delivered in the House of Commons, Monday Evening, April 6, 1868.

I hold, sir, in my hand a little volume, a pamphlet which has been very recently issued, but which I shall take the liberty of recommending to every member of this House, as well worthy of his attentive perusal. It is entitled "Intercolonial Trade—our only safeguard against disunion." Its author is Mr. Haliburton, whose happy manner of treating his important subject displays the great ability hereditary to his name. Mr. Haliburton is not, I believe, actively mixed up with politics, and undoubtedly handles his topic in no merely party style. From this reason alone the conclusion from his disinterested, impartial and unimpassioned point of view, adopted and published in the interests of the permanent prosperity of the country, must be regarded of greater weight, and of greater soundness, than those of the framers of this address, which can work but a temporary mischief. And this pamphlet shows conclusively, beyond doubt or cavil, that ought indeed to be sufficiently obvious to us all—that the Union is not to be consolidated by any temporary conciliating concession to evanescent popular prejudice—not by any momentary humoring in this direction or that, of some particular local or sectional phase of public opinion—but by our constant, earnest and unremitting care of the commercial welfare and progress of the Province. And besides this attention and practical consideration we need, above everything else, the healing influence of time. I have, sir, great reliance on the mellowing effects of time. It is not the lime, and the sand, and the hair of the mortar, but the time which has been taken to temper it. And if time be so necessary an element in so rudimentary a process as the mixing of mortar, of how much greater importance must it be in the work of consolidating the Confederation of these Provinces. Time, sir, will heal all existing irritations; Time will mellow and refine all points of contrast that seem so harsh today; Time will come to the aid of the pervading principles of impartial justice, which happily permeate the whole land. By and by Time will show us the Constitution of this Dominion as much cherished in the hearts of the people of all its Provinces, not excepting Nova Scotia, as is the British Constitution itself. And I do not despair, with the assistance of Time, of seeing by and by the hon. member for Lunenburg himself converted into the heartiest supporter of Union within those walls, willing and anxious to perpetuate the system which he will find to work so advantageously for his own Province, and adopting the position of the hon. member for Guysboro' as that of the true and patriotic statesman. I will not, sir, believe that such anticipations are ill founded, for I can find their precedent

even in the history of Nova Scotia herself. When Cape Breton was annexed to Nova Scotia—annexed not by any Act of Parliament, but simply by order of the King in Council, the people were so strongly opposed to the Union that they almost threatened rebellion. Well, sir, this took place so late as 1820, and already time has brought with it its certain healing operation, and there is no question raised now of the advantage which the Union has conferred. There is no such question, because there has been no consequent injustice. The incorporated people have found that there is no desire to rob them of their liberties, and no disposition to treat them with unfairness. They see what time shows them, that the Union was effected for their advantage, as well as that of their neighbours, and they are satisfied, because they find it working for both. And, sir, I have every confidence that we will similarly wear out Nova Scotian hostility by the unflinching exercise and exhibition of a high-minded spirit of fair play. It has been said that the interests of Canada are diametrically opposed to the interests of Nova Scotia. But I ask which of the parties to the partnership has most interest in its successful conduct, or has most to fear from the failure which the misfortunes or the losses of any of its members must occasion. Would it not be we who have embarked the largest share of the capital of Confederation. Our friends, sir, need have no fear but that Confederation will ever be administered with serene and even justice. To its whole history, from its inception to its final triumphant consummation, no stigma can be attached, no stain attributed. Its single aim from the beginning has been to consolidate the extent of British North America with the utmost regard to the independent powers and privileges of each Province. I have faith in the Confederation for another reason, and I name it with all reverence. I believe that it is the design of Providence that there shall be established on the northern portion of this continent, a nationality and system of government different from that other nationality existing to the south of us, whose system of government has not yet approved itself by the test of time, and I, sir, who have been, and who am still, its warm and earnest advocate, speak here not as the representative of any race or of any Province, but as thoroughly and emphatically a Canadian, ready and bound to recognise the claims, of any of my Canadian fellow subjects, from the farthest east to the farthest west, equally as those of my nearest neighbour, or of the friend who proposed me on the hustings. (Great applause.)