

wars. There was no binding agreement between the Mother Country and Canada as regards our participation in the wars of Great Britain, and yet Canada did magnificently, as was remarked a moment ago by my friend the President of the Privy Council. There was no binding agreement between Australia and the Mother Country, between New Zealand and the Mother Country, and yet the silken tie was stronger than any gilded chain that might have bound the Dominions to the United Kingdom. On this question, much as I have regard for the opinion of my hon. friend, as to the possibilities of new constitutional agreements, I have more confidence in the judgment of a man whose name and fame are enshrined in the heart of every true Canadian. I refer to the late Edward Blake, whose weighty opinion I beg to quote on this question of closer association with the Mother Country. The following words were spoken by him when a member of the British House of Commons in 1900:

For many years I for my part, have looked to conference, to delegation, to correspondent, to negotiation, to quasi-diplomatic methods, subject to the action of free parliaments here and elsewhere, as the only feasible way of working the quasi-federal union between the Empire and the sister nations of Canada and Australia. A quarter of a century past I dreamed the dream of Imperial Parliamentary federation, but many years ago I came to the conclusion that we had passed the turning that could lead to that terminus—if ever indeed, there was a practicable road. We have too long and too extensively gone on the lines of separate action here and elsewhere to go back now. Never forget—you have the lesson here to-day—that the good will on which you depend is due to local freedom, and would not survive its limitation.

My hon. friend referred a moment ago to the action taken by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as regards South Africa. Mr. Blake was speaking on the very day when the Liberal Government of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was proclaiming the free responsible Government of the new South African Union. There was a strong and bitter opposition in the British House of Commons to that Act of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Government, one of the most violent speeches being delivered by such an eminent man as Mr. Balfour. Yet Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Blake, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George and all true British Liberals gave Canada as the shining example that should be followed in the relations between the United Kingdom and South Africa; and as Mr. Blake said: "Never forget that the good will on which you depend is due to local freedom and would not survive its limitation." Sir.

any scheme by which you would transfer the affairs of Canada from Ottawa to London would eventually fail.

Sir Robert Borden has, time and time again, declared that you cannot bind Canada by the voice or vote of one or two representatives on vital issues unless the Prime Minister and his colleagues, sitting in the Imperial Conference, are backed by the vote of the Canadian Parliament. I have given the opinion of Mr. Blake. Here is the opinion of another giant. Sir John Macdonald, speaking a few years ago about this dream of an Imperial federation scheme, used the following language:

We are told that we want Imperial Federation. I will not trouble you with a disquisition on that subject now, but I will tell you Imperial Federation is utterly impracticable. We would never agree to send a number of men over to England to sit in Parliament there and vote away our rights and principles. I am, so far as that question goes, up to the handle a home ruler. We will govern our own country. We will put on the taxes ourselves. If we choose to misgovern ourselves, we will do so, and we do not desire England, Ireland or Scotland to tell us we are fools. We will say: If we are fools we will keep our folly to ourselves; you will not be the worse for it and we will not be the worse for any folly of yours.

That is the language of common sense. That is a pithy description of this Imperial federation dream by the great statesman who once said, "A British subject I was born; a British subject I will die." There we have the opinions of two of the foremost Canadians that I have known in this Parliament—Sir John A. Macdonald and Mr. Edward Blake.

Mr. Chairman, there is another great Canadian who, on many occasions, spoke with no less authority on this subject, and perhaps it is proper that I should quote his language, as he only passed away a few days ago. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, speaking in this House in 1905, used the following language:

I do not think that it would be possible to find in any of the self-governing colonies any desire or any intention to part with any of the powers that they have at the present time. At present we are proud to say, and to believe, that the relations of the British Empire within all its parts are absolutely satisfactory. It is not in accordance with the traditions of British history; it is not in accordance with the traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race, to make any change in their institutions until these institutions have been proved insufficient or defective in some way. The British Empire to-day is composed of nations all bearing allegiance to the same sovereign.

That is my conception of Canada in her relations with the Mother Country; and, though I do not agree with all the resolutions of the Imperial Conference, of which