

INTER-PROVINCIAL CONGRESS

Scheme Recently Explained by the Hon. Premier of the Province in a Speech at the... and Local Address.

Seeing the importance of the inter-provincial Congress scheme, and the information conveyed on the subject in the speech of Mr. Mercier, we give below some of its most interesting features:

I am quite astonished to hear the honorable member speak of my Conference scheme as a dangerous thing for the Province of Quebec. He has told us that we will be slaughtered by the Premiers of the other Provinces, if we have the misfortune to invite them to come and see us for the purpose of discussing in a friendly way the interests of the Province and the best means to be adopted for their protection.

To reassure my adversaries, it is only necessary to recall the facts:— In 1883, Hon. Mr. Warteles said:— "I think the Province can in all justice and according to the spirit of the covenant upon which Confederation is based, ask that their annual subsidy be increased."

"Before Confederation the Province had the right to levy the moneys required for the public service by imposing Customs and Excise duties and by other modes or systems of taxation."

"By the resolutions adopted by the delegates appointed to consider the scheme for uniting the Province under one Government and under the Union Act is founded, the power to levy Customs and Excise duties was taken from the local and conferred upon the General Government."

"This mode of levying was almost exclusively used for providing for administrative requirements."

"We say nothing more than this at present. Here is the language of the Speech from the Throne this year:—

"My Government intends inviting the Governments of the other Provinces and that of the Dominion to examine a question of vital importance, namely, that of their financial and other relations with the Federal Government."

"The obscurity in some respects, of the British North America Act 1867, and the interpretation given to some of its provisions, under certain circumstances, have given rise to well founded fears for the maintenance of our local institutions, and necessitate an understanding between the Provincial and Federal Governments, with a view to arrive at a state of things more satisfactory to all."

"The lapse of twenty years, since Confederation, has shown the insufficiency of the financial arrangements made at the outset."

"Upon entering into Confederation, the Province of Quebec, like the others, gave to the central power its portion of the Customs and Excise revenues, which have more than doubled since. It has received, in return, only a yearly fixed and settled grant."

"While the Provinces gave up in this way, the surest and most important of their revenues, they remained burdened with heavy expenses for the support of their local institutions, which expenses must, of necessity, increase with the growth of the population and the development of the country."

"Under these circumstances, and for these reasons, my Government believes the time has come for the Provinces to consider the situation seriously, and to consult together upon the means to surmount the present difficulties, and prevent their recurrence."

"Now, what did the hon. member for Montmorency say of this project in 1883? Here are his own words as they are reported in the Hansard:

"I have now to deal with one of the most important questions that has yet been submitted to the consideration of this House—I refer to the question of 'Better Terms,' or rather to translate into French the idea expressed by these words, the increase of the annual subsidy which our Province receives from the Federal Government. This is a most serious question, as it is both financial and political at once, and the same time. I must say that for a good while past in my own reflections on the present and future policy of the country, I have often thought of this question without deceiving myself as to its difficulties. I have gradually formed an opinion on the subject and, on this, the first favorable opportunity that has occurred to me to express it, I shall do so with all the frankness that I have given to a long study of our financial situation and that I always desire to bring to the discussion of the public interests. I have seen with pleasure that the Government have made of this question of the increase of our annual subsidy an article of their programme and that they have declared to us through the medium of the Hon. Treasurer in his Budget Speech and that they will submit it for the honorable consideration of this House, by proposing the adoption of an address to His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council demanding this increase of the subsidy and specifying the reasons that justify it. In his speech on the Budget, the hon. leader of the Opposition also referred to this question; but, in my opinion, he did so from an altogether unacceptable standpoint, supporting it with figures which I have no hesitation in pronouncing absolutely false. I may say right off that I should oppose every idea of an additional Federal subsidy, if it were proposed to solicit a special favor for our Province or, like the hon. leader of the Opposition, to put in a long plea to prove that we are treated unjustly in the distribution of the Dominion subsidies to the Provinces."

"I do not want the Province of Quebec to demand anything special or to appear as an applicant alone at Ottawa. Hear him:—

"To support the reasons which I think should be given in favor of an increase of the Federal subsidies to all the Provinces, it is useful to form a fair notion of the working of the financial system of the Canadian Confederation since 1867. I have watched with keen interest during the last fifteen years the developments of the financial operations of Canada and of each of the Provinces of the Union."

"And further on, the hon. member used the following language:—

"In my serious meditations on this subject for some years back, I have constantly placed the question on an altogether different ground from that selected by the hon. leader of the Opposition. A moment's reflection convinced me that in the interest itself of our autonomy, of our nationality, of the maintenance of the Federal system, we could not and we should not desire a partial measure in our favor. I wished to rise to higher and more general considerations than those of a political idea limited to the exigencies of our Province and which, if attempted to be reduced to practice, would assuredly prove difficulties that we have all the interest in the world to avoid. I said to myself that the measure should extend to all the Provinces of the Confederation. I asked myself, after the experience acquired since 1867, of the soundness and strength of the financial system of Confederation, &c.

time has not arrived, or at least was very slight to warrant for the 'welfare' of the Province as well as for that of each of the Provinces. It is a principle in order to have a fair and equitable distribution of the Federal subsidies to all the Provinces. I have, on this point, the honor member observed:—

"After frequently reflecting on all I have just said, I have come to the conclusion that if the basis of the system of federal subsidies to the Provincial Government were enlarged, it would be productive of still more magnificent results and the provinces would be supplied with resources which they could devote to the development of their prosperity and, as a certain consequence, to the increase of the revenues of the Federal Government that would pay them those additional subsidies. The financial situation of the Federal Government is so flourishing that this question might be very advantageously settled without causing it the slightest embarrassment."

"And further on still:—

"It would be only necessary to amend the constitutional charter so as to provide that the subsidy of 80 cents per head be based on the population of 1881 instead of on the census of 1861. For our Province, this would be equivalent to an increase of \$197,968.80 on our subsidy."

"Thus, the policy I now advocate is not a new one; neither is it revolutionary, as is pretended. It is, in fact, of essentially conservative origin."

"What was true in 1883 is still more true in 1887. The Government has changed; but the cause and the interests are the same."

"Only—and it is well to recall the facts—those gentlemen did not succeed in 1883, because the province did not want to go this year, so long as the other provinces, it would have succeeded and its rights would have been respected."

"What I ask is that the Premiers of all the provinces should meet and calmly discuss the situation, expose their wants, agree upon a common basis of action, and then formulate their joint demand with all the authority possible."

"To attain this end, it is not necessary to go to England to obtain amendments to the constitution; it will be sufficient to go to Ottawa and ask the Federal Parliament for the modification required in the financial relations between the Provinces and the central power. We have only to repeat what was already done each time that the Provincial subsidies were changed in the case of other provinces than our own."

"I speak at the head of the Executive of this Province in the person of Hon. Mr. Massey, a real friend of our local institutions, an intelligent guardian of the rights and autonomy of the Provinces. In 1883, he was a member of the Senate where he did the same honor to his race that he had done them some years previously in the Privy Council."

"What did he then say of the demands which the Province made for the purpose of getting a modification of the financial conditions settled by the Federal Act."

"Hear and meditate his words, you who profess to be so afraid of my conference. He gives you a lesson of patriotism by which you may profit."

"On the 7th May, 1883, he said: 'The Province of Quebec does not come here as a mendicant asking better terms in order to lighten the administration of its own affairs. It comes here under the broad principle, and the broad basis which were recognized by the Conservatives at the time of the Confederation—principles which I advocate myself in the House of Commons. I say at that time that by the Confederation Act the revenue-producing power of the country was badly distributed. It was so distributed that everything inured to the prosperity and advantage of the Federal Government and to the disadvantage of the Local Government. Every article brought into this country added two or three dollars to the revenue of the Federal Government; the Local Government do not begrudge it, they are quite happy that it is so; but what is the consequence to them? While every new article adds to the revenue of the Dominion, it also adds to the obligations of the Local Government. The Province is obliged to take care of the poor, it has to provide for education and for the administration of justice, and was I wrong when I stated in the House of Commons (when New Brunswick came before us for better terms) that by the system now prevailing in this country it would become necessary periodically to alter the relations between the Federal and Local Governments? That it was so I said at that time and I repeat it to-day."

"I contend that the means of the Local Legislatures of raising a revenue are entirely crippled while the Federal Government has an ever increasing source of revenue in the prosperity and increase of the population."

"Such was the opinion expressed by my sincere friend of the Province on the subject now before us, and I invite my adversaries to consider it attentively before condemning my scheme of a conference."

"These words contrast strangely with those of Hon. Mr. Chapleau the other evening at Montreal, when, under the pretext of talking me to task, he spoke of the projected conference in the most unfair terms and sought to convey the impression that it is a new combination against the minority in his Province, a revolutionary act altogether worthy of an annexationist."

"It is evident that Mr. Chapleau was amusing himself, and that he did not stink himself either."

"I hope that he did not utter the words that the Tory papers of Montreal ascribe to him; because if he did utter them he would be compelled to repudiate them before two months had elapsed as that quoted in the Times. The whole thing is a fabrication."

"Major Sanderson, speaking at Cambridge this evening, reiterated the same charges against me, and challenged them to adopt the means of vindication at their disposal."

"A COMMON OCCURRENCE. Many bad joints, by which people are crippled, are made by neglected or badly treated rheumatism. Ida Plank, of Strathroy, Ont., was afflicted with rheumatism in her fingers, so that she could not bend them. Yellow Oil cured her, and is a prompt cure for all painful complaints."

"Come in, my poor man," said a benevolent lady to a ragged tramp, as he will get you something to eat." "Thanky, mum; don't care if I do." "I suppose," continued the lady, setting a square meal before him, "your life has been full of trials?" "Yes, mum; and the worst of wuz, I allus got convicted."

"I never felt better in my life than I have since taking Budock's Balm. I had a severe bilious attack; I could not eat for several days, and was unable to work. One bottle cured me." John M. Richards, Sr., St. Tara, Ont. For all bilious troubles use B.B.B."

"A lady once went a considerable distance to visit an intimate friend who had been taken seriously ill, but the alarming symptoms had subsided before the anxious visitor arrived. In her anxiety, she knew not what to do. 'Oh, my dear Mrs. C.,' she said, 'I am quite well, now, thank you.' 'Well said you! an me come a this length to see ye!'"

"I need not recall that Hon. Mr. Mowat is the champion par excellence of Provincial

rights and that he has devoted his whole political career, a long honor his career by the way, to the defence of those rights whenever they were menaced. He is one of the most remarkable men of America, and his presence at the projected conference will be a guarantee of success. His legal attainments, his vast experience on all such questions, his energy, his courage, his high sense of justice, will be precious on the occasion."

"I shall transmit to a few days the official invitation to the Premiers of the different Provinces. I hope that they will all accept it and the frank and loyal hospitality that it and the Province of Quebec will extend to them in the old City of Champlain. We shall receive them as friends, together with the representative of the Federal Government, will send us to express the general views of the Dominion."

"In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I wish it to be thoroughly understood that this conference must not be regarded as an act of hostility towards the Federal Government. On the contrary, it is a friendly proceeding, suggested not by party spirit but by the general interest of Confederation, whose real object is to prevent conflicts in the future, to settle actual difficulties, financial and otherwise, to consolidate our young institutions, to ensure their sure and rapid development in union and harmony under the aegis of our constitution."

THE ALLEGED PARNELL LETTER

A Select Committee of Investigation Asked For.

Churchill Urges the Parnellites Not to Trust an English Jury of Taking an Action Against the "Times"—Denials from Sullivan and Egan.

LONDON, April 19.—Mr. Nethercliff, an eminent chirographic expert, has compared the signature of Mr. Parnell's letter, and declares that it is an opinion in a series of further examples. He says there are discrepancies between the signature to the Times' letter and the two signatures to the letter to the Times, and that there are also discrepancies between the latter two. He thinks the fairest comparison would be that of the Times, not with signatures recently written for a test. He says the signature given by the Times, if false, is a very good imitation, but that it would be unfair to give an opinion based upon two signatures written for purposes of comparison."

In the House of Commons this afternoon, Mr. Caldwell, Liberal-Unionist, gave notice that he would move for the appointment of a select committee to investigate the charges made by the Times against Mr. Parnell and other Irish leaders in connection with crime in Ireland."

Commenting on the letter printed yesterday, the Times says: "It is remarkable that Mr. Parnell appeared doubtful on what grounds to impugn the authenticity of the letter. The first seemed disposed to assume that it might be an autograph, which he admits to have sometimes given to a newspaper, or possibly a copy of the letter to his private secretary, which fell into unscrupulous hands. Now, however, he asserts that the signature is forged. Such discrepancies as he points out to prove this are extremely little. We possess several undoubted examples of his signature, and in our deliberations there can be no doubt that the signature in question is genuine."

Lord Randolph Churchill, speaking at Nottingham this evening, said that if the Parnellites chose to bring an action against the London Times they need not trust an English jury, because they could not take proceedings against the Times in England. He would not make himself a party to the accusation, but it might be necessary for the House of Commons, independently of the Parnellites, to take action to clear itself as a body of the grave charges made against a section of its members."

GOING TO DUBLIN. LONDON, April 20.—Mr. Parnell has gone to Dublin to endeavor to sift the matter of the letter published by the Times.

THE "TIMES" STILL BOLD. The Times this morning says: "We possess several specimens of Mr. Parnell's signature, written about the date of the disputed document, from which we are able to parallel the peculiarities of the signature." Col. King-Harman has written the Times denying Mr. Sexton's assertion that he (the writer) had had dealings with Messrs. Egan and Sheridan."

AN EXPLICIT DENIAL. CHICAGO, April 19.—In speaking of the debate in the British Parliament last night, in which his name was mentioned, Mr. Sullivan said: "While Major Sanderson is a cowardly bully and a brutal calumniator, who has been justly scored by the Parnellites, Lord Hartington has become a monomaniac, and is evidently prepared to believe any falsehood, however preposterous, on account of the death of his brother, Lord Frederick Cavendish. I knew Mr. Egan as much and just as the about the Phoenix Park affair as Lord Hartington himself, and in that respect am in precisely the same position as Mr. Parnell, Mr. Egan, Mr. Brennan and others of the National League whose names have been untruthfully connected with it. So far as Cavendish was concerned, Mr. Egan perfectly expressed my views. I believe, those of Mr. Egan, Mr. Brennan and their associates, when he says that he would have stood, if he could, between the unfortunate man and the knives of his assassins."

REAGN REITERATES. LONDON, April 19.—Mr. Egan has sent a cablegram to Mr. Labouchere, in which he says: "Sanderson's statement that I presided at a supper to celebrate the Phoenix Park murder is a wilful slander. I have never even heard of such a celebration. Parnell never wrote me such a letter as that quoted in the Times. The whole thing is a fabrication."

Major Sanderson, speaking at Cambridge this evening, reiterated the same charges against me, and challenged them to adopt the means of vindication at their disposal."

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ANTI-COERCION

The Legislature Condemns Salisbury's Action—Eloquent Addresses by Public Men—Ireland's Cause that of the World.

QUEBEC, April 18th. The debate on the anti-coercion resolutions was commenced at 7.30 p.m., and lasted until midnight. The galleries were crowded, and much enthusiasm manifested.

Mr. Owen Murphy moved the following resolutions:—"That this House desires to express feelings of the most profound regret that a measure of extreme coercion has been introduced into the Imperial Parliament, a measure utterly at variance with the spirit of the age and entirely opposed to the rights and privileges of common humanity. This House desires to place on record its strenuous protest against the threatened encroachments on the liberty of Her Majesty's subjects in Ireland and hopes that the arbitrary and unjust measure may be withdrawn. That it is the opinion of this House that it would be a gracious act on the part of Her Majesty's Government, in this year of the Queen's Jubilee, to grant Ireland a liberal measure of self-government similar to that which obtains in all Her Majesty's self-governing possessions throughout the world, and it is earnestly prayed by this House that the principle of Home Rule may be conceded to Ireland at the present session of the Imperial Parliament."

In rising amid loud applause to speak in his motion, he said that his first duty was to thank the members upon both sides of the House for the flattering reception accorded to him. He said he had no objection to the address of the House in support of his resolutions concerning the present condition and aspirations of his unfortunate country. But with such a cause and with so sympathetic an audience he knew that he need attach but little importance to what words he should say. He was addressing the representatives of a people who had more than any other in the world sympathized with the Irish people. He pointed out that amongst the Irish people of the Coercion Bill was one suspending altogether the provisions of trial by jury and substituting instead a trial before two stipendiary magistrates. The judiciary, he said, of Ireland was well known to be opposed to the Government as that of Great Britain. More than this, in certain cases offenders against the law were to be taken from their own country and people to be tried in another land across the Channel. Mr. Murphy showed that not only had the Irish representatives themselves strenuously opposed the measure, but that the Government had been obliged to withdraw it. He said that he had seen in his place to combat it, and had shown that there was even more crime in England, Wales and Scotland to-day than in Ireland. He denounced the bill as cruel and inhuman, and expressed his sorrow that so humane a Government as that of Great Britain, for humane it certainly is, should always have been so inhumane towards Ireland. He could only account for it on the ground that England did not know the people of Ireland sufficiently well. They had unfortunately regarded Ireland not as a sister, but as an enemy, and as an inferior. Ireland had been regarded for ages past as a trial by jury and even the rights of habeas corpus had been suspended. The result has been a continued protest. The Irish people not only protested, they had rebelled, and as long as the same policy of oppression and coercion was persisted in, and as long as there was an Irishman left in the British Empire, there would be a vestige of the Irish race left in any part of the British dominions, or under any flag that owed no allegiance to the Queen, so long would they continue to rebel. Referring to the question of Home Rule, he said that it is essentially a Catholic movement and calculated to bring the Catholic race to the front. He referred to the fact that most of the modern leaders of the Irish people, including Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Smith O'Brien, Robert Emmett, John Mitchell, Isaac Butt, were all Protestants, and Charles Stuart Parnell, the last leader of the movement, and who was destined to lead the people of Ireland to ultimate success, was a Protestant. He said it was frequently urged that Home Rule for Ireland meant separation from England and the dismemberment of the Empire, but protested that such a sentiment found no place in the hearts of the great majority of the Irish people. He concluded by saying that the time had come when the British Empire should be a united and happy country, and that the people of Ireland should be allowed to govern themselves. He said that he was frequently urged that Home Rule for Ireland meant separation from England and the dismemberment of the Empire, but protested that such a sentiment found no place in the hearts of the great majority of the Irish people. He concluded by saying that the time had come when the British Empire should be a united and happy country, and that the people of Ireland should be allowed to govern themselves."

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