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THE CONSOLIDATION OF CANADA

When the British North American provinces confederated in 1867 the only thing they seemed to have in common was an attachment to British institutions and British connection, and even that did not unite them very closely, for, wedged in between the British provinces by the sea and the British province on the Great Lakes, was the French Quebec. The central provinces, Ontario and Quebec, then known as Upper and Lower Canada, were connected by the Grand Trunk Railway which at that time had no competitor, but the maritime provinces were separated from the rest of the Dominion by an almost unexplored wilderness. To the north-west of Ontario lay the great lone land called the Hudson Bay Territory, known only to Indians and hunters, and generally supposed to be a land of eternal ice and snow. West of that again, and separated from it by the Rocky Mountains, was the province of British Columbia, with its head in the snow of the mountains and its feet in the warm waters of the Pacific.

The confederation scheme was the outcome of a parliamentary deadlock between the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, which, although geographically as dependent upon one another as Siamese twins, were separated by race hatred and differences of language and religion. It was carried by a narrow majority in most of the provinces. In Nova Scotia the majority of the people were opposed to it, and British Columbia was only induced to join by the promise of a railway through Canadian territory connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Before the American colonies confederated they had fought together and grown enthusiastic in a common cause. There was no war to weld the Canadian provinces together. Linked to Britain but separated from one another they had no community of interest, and nothing had been done to encourage trade between them. The people of Ontario hated the *habitants* of Quebec, and the "Bluenoses" down by the sea disliked all Canadians, whether they lived along the banks of the St. Lawrence and talked a French patois, or on the shores of Ontario and Erie speaking English like themselves.

Naturally, many citizens of the young Dominion had no faith in its future. They predicted all kinds of disasters and declared that the consolidation of Canada could never be anything more than a name. There were others, however, who argued that the natural resources of the Canadian provinces were fully equal to those of the Northern States, that