

most trying character. With a conterminous frontier of more than 1,500 miles, in many places an imaginary one, their own citizens flocked here in great numbers, and were entitled to the rights of hospitality so long as they did not abuse it. Some with scrupulous honor fulfilled their obligations in that respect, but others endeavored to make British America the basis of hostile operations against a friendly state. There was hardly a day in which it was not necessary to exercise the utmost vigilance in the performance of our duties as neutrals. Many in Canada exercising the undoubted right of individual opinion sympathized with one side or the other in that terrible war, which for four years desolated this continent. But with reference to one event only, notwithstanding the many and important occasions on which Canada sometimes voluntarily, and sometimes by request, interposed, was any complaint whatever made, and that was with reference to the St. Alban's raid. Although it is well known that that enterprise was undertaken by a few individual citizens of the United States so secretly and so cunningly, that no foresight on our part could have guarded against or prevented it; yet, as there was some question in reference to the property carried off, we thought it better to err on the side of justice and magnanimity, and Parliament accordingly made prompt restitution of the supposed wrong. It is some reason for pride on our part, as a people and government, that through all these difficulties, which came home to Canada more than to any other country, and which exacted such unceasing vigilance on the part of our Executive, fewer complaints or claims arose than with respect to any other nation; and that our fulfilment of international duty, no matter on which side the balance of individual opinion or sympathy lay, was such as to call forth the repeated and grateful acknowledgments of the government of the United States. I allude to this to show that it is not only in respect to material things that we have made progress towards maturity, but that we understand the higher duties which belong to us, and that from no act of ours has any peril menaced, or complication arisen, which could affect the national relations. Seeing this, let us not be too eager or impatient to anticipate our destiny; let us beware of doing what may be irrevocable, but, conscious that we are fulfilling the work of the day, and that we are fitted for the discharge of any duties that may arise, let us calmly await the progress of events, assured that in due time they will reach maturity, and that our destiny can never be mean or dishonorable. But this, sir, is a digression which I hope my friends will pardon, and I recur for a moment to events having more present interest for us; those which are connected with the existing order of things—the creation of the new Dominion. For myself, I shall always think with gratification on having had an opportunity of doing my share in laying its foundation, and especially in those proceedings in which, in common with some of the minority of Lower Canada, I participated, because they resulted in calming the not altogether unnatural apprehension, in reference to the special interests of that minority, in the future working of the constitution. Had these fears made headway, they might have marred the harmony which now prevails, and I am glad to take this public occasion of expressing my own sense of the honorable manner in which our fellow-subjects, who constitute the majority in Quebec,

have carried out, in the fullest measure, our just expectations in reference to these interests. (Cheers.) Depend on it, all that is required in the future is a continuance of the same just and liberal policy on the one side, and the same repression of jealous fears on the other, and I fervently trust that nothing may occur to disturb the good feeling and harmony which have prevailed hitherto. (Hear, hear.) You will not, I trust, think me too egotistical if I say a word or two, and but a word or two, in reference to that branch of public administration with which I have had special connection since the time of the Union. I am not going to be guilty of the bad taste of forgetting what is due to a mixed assemblage like this, by touching on party politics; nor am I going to bore you with figures. I know that all whom I now address are interested in the stable condition of the country, and I claim neither for myself nor my party any special merit. I believe that those who have so well performed the functions of a constitutional opposition, since the Union, would if they had been in power, have done the same; and I would be more than ungenerous if I did not pay them the tribute, on parting, of stating that whatever may have been their objections to the Union when it was proposed, as soon as it became a fact, no men could have given a more loyal, disinterested, patriotic co-operation to promote its working, or been more ready to view with favor every plan for placing its financial credit on a sound basis. (Hear, hear.) For myself I acknowledge, with all humility, that whatever success has been achieved, in this respect, it is wholly due to the earnest and hearty support of my friends, and to the generous forbearance and magnanimous concert of my opponents; and that I have been little else than a willing instrument in the hands of these influences. Coming after a predecessor of pre eminent ability and great experience, a party and a personal triumph over one who had little aptitude for the duties, and who entered on their performance at a difficult time would have been easy. A series of political complications in Canada had for years stood in the way of successive Finance Ministers; the balance of parties had interposed almost insurmountable obstacles to an equalization of Revenue and Expenditure; and we found ourselves with a large floating debt to be dealt with at the threshold of the Union. The Maritime Provinces had undertaken, and were prosecuting extensive public works, requiring a heavy outlay, for which provision had to be made by the new Dominion, while their current engagements, which would have been kept afloat as a sort of running account had they remained separate, had all to be paid off by the Dominion and charged against them. We had, besides, to raise money for new works, the prosecution of which was imposed on us by the Act of Union, and that too, before we knew how our credit would really stand. (Hear.) I confess I hardly realized the magnitude of these undertakings and engagements when I entered office, else I might have hesitated more than I did, to be guilty of the temerity of stepping into the shoes of a predecessor possessed of such resources, and of entering on the task, which to him might have been an easy one. But, sir, the work has been accomplished; the engagements of every kind have been met; the floating debt has been all funded. We have had a little to the good in the way of a surplus of revenue over the expenditure each year since the union, our credit stands high both with ourselves and in the great money market of the world.