

ment did not consider it was their duty to grant the demand put forward by the Local Government. I am not going to enter into those reasons, for they have already been fully met and ably answered by a joint address of both branches of the Legislature of that Province; but there was one part of that reply which I think was very unfair and in very bad taste; I allude to that portion of the memorial in which the Dominion Government say to the Local Government:

"Had not the Government of Nova Scotia withdrawn from the credit of the debt account large amounts which they expended in railway extension and other public works, the amount which they would have received last year from the Dominion Government would have been amply sufficient with their local resources, for all provincial purposes."

I think that portion of the reply ought never to have been inserted. If the Local Government could have been charged with extravagance, with waste in the management of public money, then it would have been quite within the scope of the Dominion Government to have shown where this had occurred. But were we in Nova Scotia forever to remain without railways? In 1867 our railway system was scarcely extended to New Glasgow; it was completed, I believe, in the year of Confederation. If, according to the doctrine laid down in this memorial, the Local Government should not build railways, then that portion of the Province which did not enjoy the benefit of railways was to remain without them forever. That is the only logical conclusion to be drawn from that reply, for you would not extend our railways and you say the Local Government should not. The Government said: If you had not expended this money on railways you would have had ample means, with your other resources, to carry on the Government of the Province. The people of eastern Nova Scotia, who had contributed by taxation to the building of railways in other portions of the Province, were dissatisfied, and urged the Government to extend the railways east. We were for nearly fourteen years without a mile of railroad east, and we have now, twenty years after Confederation, only eighty miles of railway in eastern Nova Scotia, and the Island of Cape Breton, with its vast and varied resources; its great mineral wealth and inexhaustible fisheries, is at this hour without a single mile of railway. Still, when the Local Government of Nova Scotia thought in the interest of that section they were wisely expending public money, they were taunted by the Government of the day by saying that if they had not expended this money in the extension of railways they would have enough now to carry on the affairs of the Government of Nova Scotia. I say that they could not have expended their money more wisely or judiciously than by building these railways, which opened up and developed one of the finest agricultural counties of this Province—the county represented by my hon. friend the Minister of Justice—thereby adding immensely to its material wealth and prosperity. Not only so, but it was by this action of the Local Government, which was charged as being a waste of money, that the Strait of Canso was tapped, thereby making this eighty miles of railway a feeder to the Intercolonial Railway and the whole railway system of this country, and thereby throwing money into the Treasury of the Dominion. So far from this being a reason why the just claims of Nova Scotia should be refused, I think it is a strong argument the other way; and I want no stronger evidence in support of that view than the language used by my hon. friend, the Finance Minister, when, in 1882, as Minister of Railways, he was asking this Parliament to subsidise certain roads, one of them being the Oxford and New Glasgow, in the Province of Nova Scotia. I will quote a short extract from his speech on that occasion:

"I believe it is a wise policy to aid in the construction of these lines. Although these are private enterprises, it is impossible to build these railways in Canada judiciously, in any section of the country, by means of either subsidies from the Local Government or private enterprises,
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without enriching the Treasury of Canada. Who receives the benefit from all the increased trade which flows from the increased development of the country by the construction of these roads? Certainly the Dominion Treasury. Every mile of road constructed puts a certain sum in the Treasury."

I believe that those views are sound and correct; I believe that by building these eighty miles of railway the Local Government was developing the resources of the country, increasing the trade of the country and enriching the Dominion Treasury. And if by doing so they have not sufficient revenues to-day to carry on their local affairs, to meet their engagements and provide sufficient for their educational and other requirements, I say that when they apply here for better terms, as they have the right to do, it is unfair and unwise to meet that application with the taunt that, "if you had not spent money in developing the country and increasing its trade you would not now be applying for better terms." I think that that part of the reply might well have been spared, in consideration of the language I have quoted from the Finance Minister, who so completely combats that view. There is one fact as to which there can be no two opinions. Whatever the cause may be, there is no doubt of the fact that Nova Scotia at present is unable, with the amount at her disposal, to meet her engagements and provide those things which, by the British North America Act, she is bound to provide. But, Sir, this was not the case before the Union. There was then no Province in this Dominion with a lower tariff or in a more prosperous condition than Nova Scotia, and to-day there is none with less revenue for local purposes than she has. Now, if the statements contained in the addresses of both branches of the Legislature, if the memorials from the different Local Governments be true, then, as I said in the outset, it is the imperative duty of the Government to enquire immediately into these matters and endeavor, if possible, to adopt some measures to relieve the prevailing discontent. It may, perhaps, be said that this would open up the British North America Act, that if you do it for Nova Scotia you must do it for the other Provinces. I admit that it may have that effect. I am not here claiming any right exclusively for Nova Scotia. I claim it for Nova Scotia to-night, and if under that arrangement, which was never considered to be a fixed arrangement or one that could not be opened up, Nova Scotia, after twenty years, finds that she has not the means successfully to carry on her affairs, then I say that you have the same right as you had in 1869 to open up the agreement and grant her better terms. And if Quebec should come here to-morrow and show the same reasons for the Dominion coming to her aid, then my voice would be lifted up in her behalf as it is to-night in behalf of my own Province. And if Ontario—or Prince Edward Island, or any of the other Provinces—finds that it has not sufficient funds to carry on its affairs, or that an injustice was done to it in the first place when the scheme was, as has been stated already, hastily entered into, then I would favor a reconsideration of the relations of such Provinces to the Dominion. If those who founded the Union wished it to be lasting and successful, I hold that wherever they find friction or discontent—no matter from what cause arising—upon the shoulders of these men specially, who claim to be the fathers of the Union, rests the imperative duty of endeavoring to ascertain what remedy can be applied to allay that discontent as speedily as possible. The right hon. gentleman the leader of the Government said on that occasion, let us reconcile the Nova Scotians, for Nova Scotia is the keystone of the Union. I do not know whether the right hon. gentleman entertains the same views to-night, but I hope he does, and I hope he will say now as he said then, let us reconcile the Nova Scotians for Nova Scotia is the keystone of the Union. I hope, at all events, that this matter, which is now brought up for the second or third time in this House, will receive the careful consideration of the Government, and if it is neces-