

# SPEECH

ON THE

## CONFEDERATION OF THE PROVINCES.

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MR. MORRIS said—MR. SPEAKER, the member for Lambton has, I think, set a good example, and I shall endeavor if it be possible to follow it. I desire to state at the outset that this, as has been well observed by many who have spoken upon the subject, is no new question; but that in one phase or another, as was very properly stated in the narrative given to the House by the honorable member for Montreal West, it has been before the people of this country from time to time for many years past. It is not my intention to follow that honorable gentleman in his interesting narrative of the history of this question, but I desire to ask the attention of the House to the fact that this is the third time that this question has been formally brought before Parliament by the Government of this country. The first occasion was, I believe, in 1858, when the then Governor General, in closing the session of Parliament for that year, used in the Speech from the Throne the following words:—"I propose, in the course of the recess, to communicate with Her Majesty's Government and with the government of the sister colonies, on another matter of very great importance. I am desirous of inviting them to discuss with us the principles on which a bond of a federal character uniting the provinces of British North America may, perhaps, hereafter be practicable." That formal statement was followed by the despatch which has been referred to frequently in this House and during this debate, and which was made the basis of the motion laid before the House last session by the honorable member for South Oxford—which motion has had the effect of causing present and, as I believe, future great results. (Hear, hear.) I be-

lieve the appointment of the committee moved for by that honorable gentleman will be looked back to as an era in the history of this country. (Hear, hear.) Now, as to the second occasion on which this question was formally brought before the attention of the House and country, we have heard from those who object to this scheme, that the people of the country have been taken by surprise, that they do not understand it, and that they are not prepared to discuss it. I would ask, sir, in reference to that, if this present Government was not formed on the very basis and understanding that it would bring about a settlement of this question, and if the people of the country did not know this to be the fact? I hold in my hand the basis upon which the Government was formed, in which the following is stated as the result of a long negotiation between the leading members of it:—

The Government are prepared to pledge themselves to bring in a measure next session, for the purpose of removing existing difficulties by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-West territory to be incorporated into the same system of Government.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Hear, hear!

MR. MORRIS—I trust the honorable gentleman will say "Hear, hear," with the same emphasis when I read the next paragraph:—

And the Government will seek, by sending representatives to the Lower Provinces, and to England, to secure the assent of those interests which are beyond the control of our own legislation to such a measure as may enable all British