

INTRODUCTION.

The compilation of the following pages was commenced, during the past winter, at the request of several gentlemen who have taken a deep interest in the question of a Confederation of the British American Colonies. The Conferences held in the Maritime Provinces and in Canada, in connection with that question, in the autumn of 1864, have excited a great deal of public attention in Great Britain and America; and it has been considered, that—notwithstanding the confidential manner in which the proceedings of the Conferences were conducted—there should be some connected account of their meetings—of the times and places when and where they met—and of some of the leading incidents connected with the great business entrusted to them. The most important of these incidents were the utterances of the Delegates on important public occasions.

It has been the object of the Compiler to collect all the principal speeches delivered on those occasions. They contain valuable information bearing upon the interests of the Colonies; and nearly all abound with high-toned patriotic sentiments which entitle them to a more lasting record than could be allotted to them in the newspapers of the passing hour.

The speeches herein presented have been revised with much care. The Compiler has availed himself, in all cases where he could do so conveniently, of the polite attention of the speakers residing in the several Provinces, in assisting him to correct the errors that were necessarily attendant upon hastily prepared newspaper reports. This has certainly delayed the issuing of the present little work, but it is to be hoped that it may be all the more useful from the delay, as being more correct than otherwise it would be.

This little book makes no pretension to the dignity of authorship, and on that account it may not be supposed to be within the range of criticism. The Compiler cannot, however, but expect that those who look with an unfavorable eye on Confederation will find something to cavil at in these pages. It is the fashion of some persons—wise in their own conceit—to