

unless some re-arrangement is made that will increase their allowances; and from past experience we know, that if the time for making demands is judiciously chosen, they will not be denied. Ontario desired finality, and finality can only be obtained through an increase of the present subsidies. No doubt Ontario could reduce her expenditure by shifting the responsibility of some of the services upon the municipalities; her people are educated in this local responsibility and municipal taxation; a very slight increase of this would relieve the provincial finances. It may be said, let the other provinces do this also, and relief would be found. To this suggestion the representatives of the lower provinces reply: "The attempt to force an onerous municipal taxation upon our people to relieve the provincial treasury, would create such dissatisfaction that withdrawal from Confederation would be insisted on. Our people are not accustomed to it, they are not educated to it. The Provincial Government have always constructed and maintained the roads and bridges. It did so before Confederation, and was enabled to meet this and all other necessary expenditure under a ten per cent. tariff; and if the people now under the union, in addition to having to submit to a 35 per cent. tariff—mainly for the benefit of manufacturers in other provinces—have also to submit to heavy municipal taxation to relieve the provincial treasury, the dissatisfaction already existing, would become so intensified, that the people would become a unit in favor of withdrawal from the Dominion." Hon. gentlemen know how difficult it is, suddenly to change the customs and habits of a people, confirmed by generations, or centuries of use and wont.

The conditions and circumstances of these provinces, and the feeling existing there, cannot be ignored. Nor will the past capricious and unjust system of special grants be longer submitted to in Ontario. Some common ground had to be sought that would meet the circumstances and secure finality. That common ground is found in the propositions of the Conference. It has been accepted as an equitable basis of a final settlement by the Governments of five of the most populous provinces in the Union. Finality is secured by the condition that the Imperial Act shall declare this settlement final and absolute, and not within the power of the Federal Parliament to alter, add to, or vary. (Cheers.) The plan, since published, had been discussed by every newspaper in the country, and I think I can say truly that, with the exception of a few partizan sheets, which cannot be expected to concur in anything not proposed by their own party, the Reform press, the Independent press, and the moderate Conservative press, have expressed approval of the plan, and surprise, considering the difficulties that surround such a settlement, that a way has been found to satisfy the provinces, do justice to all, to relieve the Federal treasury from the continual raids to which it has heretofore been subjected, and that upon terms so little onerous to the Dominion. (Applause.)

Hon. gentlemen had charged that the objects and actions of the Conference were partizan in their character. I defy hon. gentlemen to point to a single incident or proceeding in connection with the calling of the Conference, or a single word or proposition in the resolutions that would justify such a charge. And I am sure that if hon. gentlemen will, in the vote they will be called upon to give, as honestly endeavour to divest their judgment of all partizan feeling, as did the representatives at the Conference, they will unanimously cast their vote in support of the resolutions. (Loud and prolonged applause.)