

GEORGE BROWN

AND

Confederation

There is little resemblance between the Canada of 1867 and of 1917. In those fifty years a vast change has taken place. It is common to explain that change by the fact that in 1867 a new constitution came into force. That the progress made during the half century has been due to the development of natural resources is not acceptable to those who love the marvellous, and who would have it that it is due to the adoption of a written constitution rather than to the labor of an industrious and energetic yeomanry. That a good government is conducive to prosperity is not denied but it has to be kept in mind that the change in 1867 was not from a bad to a good form of government. Canada had fifty years ago an excellent form of government, more helpful to industry than that which now prevails, in so far that taxes were lower and the machinery of government more simple and direct. The cause of a change was not that the form of government was inferior, and needed to be replaced by a better, but that the domination by Quebec had reached so exasperating a point that a readjustment of the relations between the two provinces could no longer be avoided. Confederation was adopted to overcome that difficulty. That was its special purpose. Has it done so? If it has not, then Confederation, in the special object for which it was de-