

Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle
of Canada

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MARITIME UNION

We already know that changes may be brought about under the stress of war conditions which would ordinarily require years of discussion and preparation. The next few months may see a political change in Canada which has been proposed a number of times, but has never been completed. This is a union of the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

It is interesting to note that the suggestion now comes from an educational source. A maritime educational convention recently met in Moncton, N.B., for the purpose of standardizing the educational systems of the three provinces and of adopting uniform text books. The discussion of the subject naturally led to a consideration of all the advantages which would be felt if the provinces were united, and it was found that practically all the delegates approved of a union of this kind. It will be something new if educational interests prove to be a moving force in Canadian political life, acting independently of political parties, or of trade and industrial interests, and the result should be beneficial. While this educational convention was meeting, another conference of the three governments was being held to arrange a uniform policy with regard to settling returned soldiers on the land. Recommendations of this kind were prepared for submission to the federal government.

The expansion of Canada into the west and the establishment of new provinces there has shifted the centre of our political and economic life westward. While other Canadian provinces have been growing rapidly, those to the east have been practically standing still. The result has been that new and greater interests have been developed, and controversies now range around questions quite different from the old subjects of dispute. The maritime provinces have been driven together, so to speak, in order to maintain their many common interests against the industrialism of Ontario and Quebec and the

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agricultural interests of the west. In the old days, when there was no Canadian west, it was easy enough to create political dissension among Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, because they appeared to have economic interests at variance with one another. The development of manufacturing in Ontario and Quebec and of agriculture upon a new and extensive scale in the west has served to reveal the practical uniformity of the economic life in the maritime provinces. Prince Edward Island is agricultural, and agriculture is also a leading industry in the other two provinces. They are all devoted to fishing. New Brunswick has considerable forest resources in the course of development and Nova Scotia has large mining industries.

Before confederation with Canada opened the way to a larger union in 1864 a maritime union was being discussed in these provinces. Ever since the Canadian government took over matters of interest to the Dominion as a whole, as defined in the British North America Act, the maritime provinces have still found it convenient to act in common upon some local matters, and the advantage of having a common body, with authority to legislate on such questions, has become increasingly apparent. The Hon. J. B. M. Baxter, former attorney-general of New Brunswick, in addressing the Moncton conference, urged the union as a means toward securing stronger and more uniform representation of eastern interests in federal matters and united action in obtaining the full development of the resources of the provinces. Mr. H. J. Logan, K.C., of Amherst, said that if legislative union were not found possible an alternative might be found in a maritime legislative council to deal with matters of common interest, while the present legislatures, much reduced in size, could continue to care for matters of purely local interest. The former body might deal with education, higher courts of appeal, workmen's compensation, the encouragement of industry, the advertising of the resources of the provinces, etc.

This scheme would be simply a federation within the Canadian federation, and would have the advantage of securing uniform action on matters of common interest