

The explanation of this amalgamation is obvious. The French of Louisiana, when they were formed into a state, in which they were a majority, were incorporated into a great nation, of which they constituted an extremely small part. The eye of every ambitious man turned naturally to the great centre of federal affairs, and the high prizes of federal ambition. The tone of politics was taken from those by whose hands its highest powers were wielded; the legislation and government of Louisiana were from the first insignificant, compared with the interests involved in the discussions at Washington. It became the object of every aspiring man to merge his French, and adopt completely an American nationality. What was the interest of individuals, was also the interest of the state. It was its policy to be represented by those who would acquire weight in the councils of the federation. To speak only a language foreign to that of the United States was, consequently, a disqualification for a candidate for the posts of either senator or representative; the French qualified themselves by learning English, or submitted to the superior advantages of their English competitors. The representation of Louisiana, in congress, is now entirely English, while each of the federal parties in the state conciliates the French feeling, by putting up a candidate of that race. But the result is, that the union is never disturbed by the quarrels of these races; and the French language and manners bid fair, in no long time, to follow their laws, and pass away like the Dutch peculiarities of New York.

It is only by the same means—by a popular government, in which an English majority shall permanently predominate, that Lower Canada, if a remedy for its disorders be not too long delayed, can be tranquilly ruled.

On these grounds, I believe that no permanent or efficient remedy can be devised for the disorders of Lower Canada, except a fusion of the government in that of one or more of the surrounding provinces; and as I am of opinion, that the full establishment of responsible government can only be permanently secured by giving these colonies an increased importance in the politics of the empire, I find in union the only means of remedying at once, and completely, the two prominent causes of their present unsatisfactory condition.

Two kinds of union have been proposed—federal and legislative. By the first, the separate legislature of each province would be preserved in its present form, and retain almost all its present attributes of internal legislation—the federal legislature exercising no power, save in those matters of general concern which may have been expressly ceded to it by the constituent provinces. A legislative union would imply a complete incorporation of the provinces included in it under one legislature, exercising universal and sole legislative authority over all of them, in exactly the same manner as the parliament legislates alone for the whole of the British Isles.

On my first arrival in Canada, I was strongly inclined to the project of a federal union; and it was with such a plan in view, that I discussed a general measure for the government from the colonies with the deputations of the Lower Provinces, and with various leading individuals and public bodies in both the Canadas. I was fully aware, that it might be objected that a federal union would, in many cases, produce a weak and rather cumbrous government; that a colonial federation must have, in fact, little legitimate authority or business, the greater part of the ordinary functions of a federation falling within the scope of the Imperial legislature and executive; and that the main inducement to federation, which is the necessity of conciliating the pretensions of independent states to the maintenance of their own sovereignty, could not exist in the case of colonial dependencies, liable to be moulded according to the pleasure of the supreme authority at home. In the course of the discussions which I have mentioned, I became aware also of great practical difficulties in any plan of federal government, particularly those that must arise in the management of the general revenues, which would, in such a plan, have to be again distributed among the provinces. But I had still more strongly impressed on me the great advantages of a united government; and I was gratified by finding the leading minds of the various colonies strongly and generally inclined to a scheme, that would elevate their countries into something like a national existence. I thought that it would be the tendency of a federation, sanctioned and consolidated by a monarchical government, gradually to become a complete legislative union; and that thus, while conciliating the French of Lower Canada, by leaving them the government of their own province, and their own internal legislation, I might provide for the protection of British interests by the general government, and for the gradual transition of the provinces into an united and homogeneous community.