

CONFEDERATION

An Address by A. B. Morine, K.C., in the Methodist College Hall, Feb. 1915.

(Continued from yesterday.)
All customs and excise duties are collected by the Dominion. No province can impose either. The tariff of the Dominion applies equally in every province. The amount paid directly to each province directly, or for Dominion services in each province, has no relation to the amount of customs and excise collected in each province. The first is fixed by the contract of union, the second is fixed by the amount voted in parliament for the general service of the Dominion. For instance, if after Union with Canada, trade became dull in this Colony in any year, as it periodically does, and the customs revenue from imports fell off, the expenditure by the Dominion on its public services here, and its direct subsidy to the provincial government here, would not fall off in any degree. One effect of this would be, that our moneys for Education, roads and poor would not be less in hard times than in good, as it threatens to be in this hard year.

THE OBJECTIONS USUALLY MADE.

I have diligently sought to learn what are the objections to Confederation which are entertained by the public, and propose to deal with them briefly. And first, as to those which appeal to inherited prejudice. The verdict of 1869 was against it. Well, what if it was? The people of 1869 may have been unwise or even if they were wise in their day, this generation has to consider very different circumstances, and a very different verdict.



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may be advisable. The terms they rejected would not be proposed now. The decision was not made on economic grounds, but by appeals to prejudice that may not now exist.

If we joined Canada, we should be sacrificing our independence! What nonsense! Did Natal or Cape Colony lose independence because they became part of the Dominion of South Africa, or New South Wales or Victoria because they became part of the Commonwealth of Australia. We should give up to a parliament in which we should be represented, the exclusive control we can now exercise over a limited number of subjects, but in return would provide for those subjects much more amply than now.

Oh, the objector says, we should be represented at Ottawa by such a small number of representatives that their voice would not be heard, and the Colony would be neglected. That error arises out of the failure to comprehend that the Colony would become part and parcel of the Dominion, and would not be considered as an alien colony struggling for recognition in a parliament of enemies. The smaller provinces of the Dominion have been most liberally treated since 1867. While Ontario has provided one premier of Canada, and Quebec one, Nova Scotia has provided three. One might reasonably look forward to a not distant day when a Newfoundland-er would be the Prime Minister of Canada.

What Ireland has been fighting for, Newfoundland would surrender if she entered the Dominion." I have heard a speaker declare. That also is nonsense! Irish nationalists have accepted an Irish parliament with power over Irish affairs of a local character, which is precisely what Newfoundland would have after Union. The majority of Irish people were of a different race and religion to the majority of those who elected the parliament of Great Britain, and they harbored the feeling that justice had been done to them. Neither race nor religion offers obstacles to the union of this Colony with Canada.

There are a certain number of people who think that if we entered the Dominion some interference would result with our denominational system of education. I am bound to tell you, however, that Union with Canada instead of interfering with the existing denominational system of education in this country would have the effect of more certainly insuring the continuance of that system.

Sec. 93 of the British North America Act, 1867, reads as follows:
"In and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make laws

THE BUG-A-BOO OF TAXATION.

Then there is the bug-a-boo of Direct Taxation—the people were told in 1869 that even their window panes would be taxed, and their property sold to pay the taxes. If the Colony joined the Union. The fear of this thing exists still, in certain quarters, and is artfully kept alive by selfishly interested people. Not a dollar is raised by the Dominion parliament through direct taxation. Not a province in the Dominion raises any part of its revenue by direct taxation. Not a dollar would be raised here by the Dominion by direct taxation. Not a dollar would be raised through that

method by the local government if the terms were as liberal as I think they should and would be.

Before Confederation, in the Provinces then existing, certain cities, towns and counties or districts, had and exercise, the privilege of directly taxing their residents for the support of schools and for local purposes generally. The cities, towns and counties of the province constituting Canada still tax their people for similar public service, not because there is any law of the Dominion requiring them to do so, but because in the desire of the people for better schools, better roads and better public services generally than they could otherwise have, they decide to tax themselves when they like and as much as they like.

In this City and two or three of our towns, direct taxation is imposed for civic purposes. If our public expenditure continues to increase, it is evident that our road school and poor grants will either be reduced, or that direct taxation may have to be resorted to. The power to tax in that way exists now, and would not be affected by Confederation, but the need of it might be postponed by good terms of Union.

The underlying motive of the scheme of Confederation is that local matters shall be cared for by local bodies, and that the people shall directly govern themselves in all local matters, fixing their own expenditure and raising the money as they like.

In this connection I have heard it said several times that in the Dominion the traps and nets of fishermen are taxed. This is not so. This rumour arises from the fact that in order to set traps on Canadian Labrador, it is necessary to pay a license fee according to the length of the leader. That coast is permanently settled. Its people do not care for traps, which are chiefly used by merchants or schooner owners, and the license fee there is imposed to protect the shore fishermen. It is only on the Labrador this law applies.

NO INJURY TO LOCAL INDUSTRIES.

The objection that Confederation would injure local industries is the one which is heard most frequently in St. John's, where almost all the manufacturing of the Colony is done. Connected with this is the assertion that Canadian competition would close up half the shops on Water Street. The Eaton Co., of Toronto, it is said would undersell all our shopkeepers. These assertions appeal to classes in this city who justly exercise large influence, and whose objections should be most respectfully listened to. They

include a considerable labouring class, and almost all our local investors.

As a Commercial people we are inclined to respect vested rights, even where these rights are opposed to the common good, and I do not dismiss the matter, as I might, by saying that if local industries could not withstand competition, the consuming class would be benefited, and it, after all, should be the great object of our solicitude.

But I am not ready to admit that the manufacturers of the Colony would suffer materially by competition with Canadians after Confederation. Cheaper labor, and more abundant, and certainly not poorer in quality, can be procured in this Colony than in Canada. The raw material for manufacture could in most cases be procured or imported into this Colony as cheaply as into the other parts of the Dominion. Our Manufacturers would have—so far as the local market is concerned—all the advantages, as against competition from Canada, of local business connection, local knowledge of the people's special needs, and local preference for home-made goods. Why, then, should the local manufacturer suffer in competition with the outsider?

I shall be told, perhaps, that the price of goods is lessened by a large output, and that the outsider could sell cheaper because he could sell more. But why should not the manufacturer here invade Canada with his goods, just as the Canadian comes here? The whole broad Dominion would be a market for the goods made in New-



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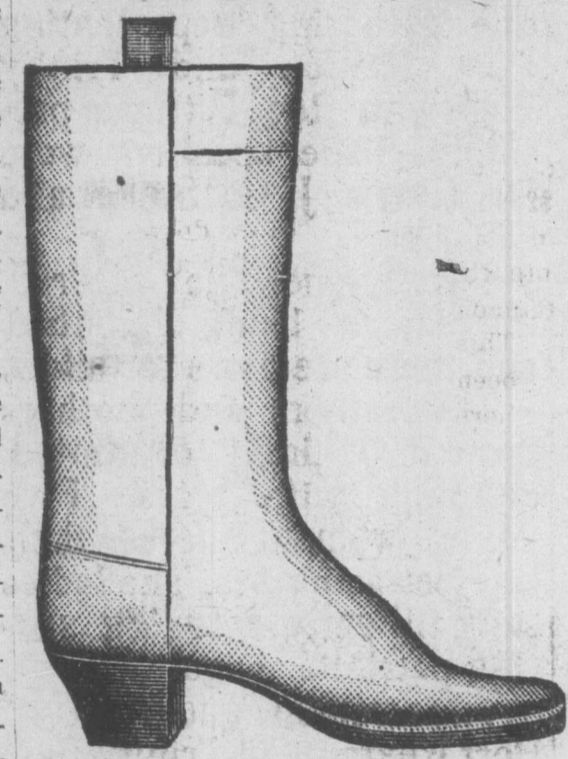
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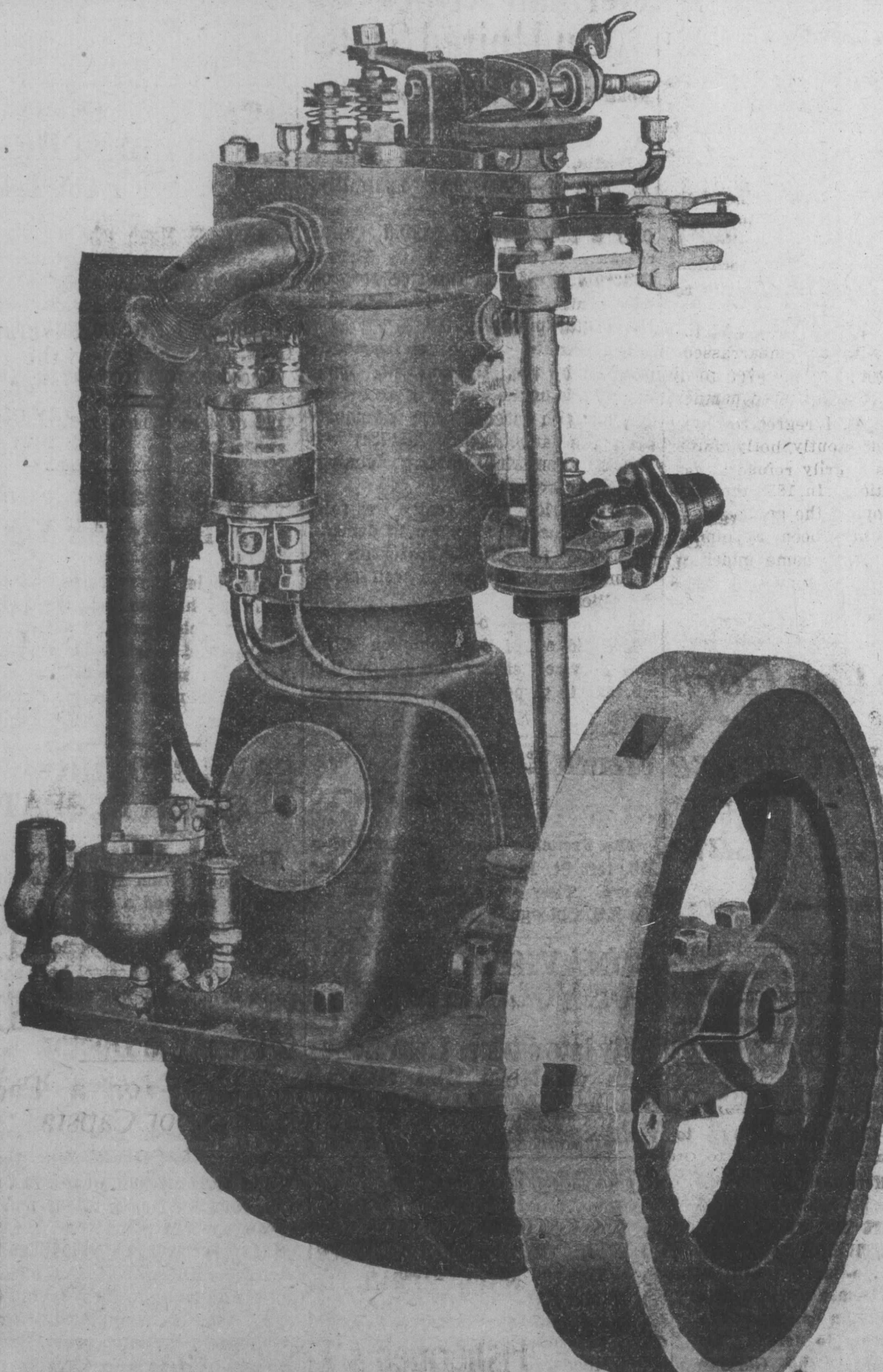
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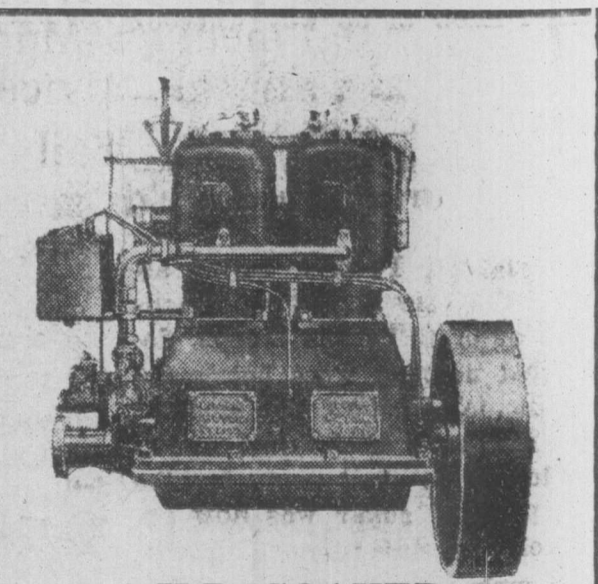
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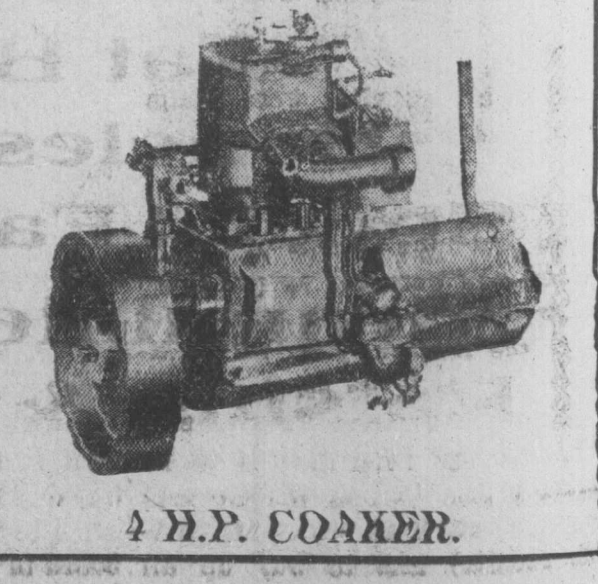
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