

is interested in pursuing the subject further, in a book entitled *The Life of Sir Alexander Galt*, by the late O. D. Skelton, he will find at page 330, a letter which was the basis for establishing that right, following which interference in these matters by Great Britain ceased.

We now come to confederation, which formed the basis of Canada as we have it today. When we consider the conditions which existed in this country at that time, it becomes obvious that confederation was a tremendous achievement. Behind the desire for confederation of the Canadian provinces were two impelling forces. First, the United States had just fought a civil war in which, curiously enough, the primary issue was not, as most people think, the abolition of slavery, but the question of state rights. During this conflict much anti-British feeling developed in the northern states of the American union; the sense of possible danger, and the need to provide against it, so far as that could be accomplished, was one impelling force behind the desire for confederation. The second impelling force was the difference which arose in Canada between Quebec and Ontario. The population of Ontario was increasing rapidly, and the public men from that part of Canada wanted a stronger representation in parliament as it then existed.

Confederation was achieved, and I repeat that it was a remarkable accomplishment.

We come later in history to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who, I think, made a notable contribution to Canada's advance towards nationhood. Those whose memories go back fifty years will recall a very definite movement in Britain—not by the government, but by people outside the government, known as "the Round Table Group"—with a view to establishing a common voice in international affairs so far as Great Britain and the dominions were concerned. I think Sir Wilfrid exercised sound judgment at that time in refusing to be taken in by that camp. He made a great contribution towards advancing the unity of Canada by giving Canadians from the Atlantic to the Pacific a pride in their country. As honourable senators know, he preached the gospel that the racial and religious conflicts, in the past, as in the future, should not submerge the great advance that could be made to Canadian nationhood.

Sir Robert Borden also made some notable contributions to the growth of Canadian nationhood, the most outstanding of which was his insistence that Canada be represented in her own right at the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles. The events of that day are now more than thirty years past, but I well recall the night when the decision was reached—and my honourable

friend from Saltcoats (Hon. Mr. Calder) will also remember it—that if Canada was not to be represented in her own right by her own delegates, free from any others, she would not be represented at all.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: It is not going beyond the facts of history to say that at that time the British government put forth the suggestion that Canada should be represented in the delegation of Great Britain. Sir Robert's insistence on independent representation at the signing of the peace treaty marked a long step in the advance of Canada towards the status of nationhood.

We come next to the conference of 1926, referred to by my honourable friend from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Hayden), and which I need not labour. That conference established a basis, later incorporated in the Act of Westminster, which to all intents and purposes gave this country practically complete independence.

An event which took place prior to 1926, and which perhaps should be referred to, was the negotiation in 1923 under the King administration of that day, of the Halibut Treaty between Canada and the United States. That was the first treaty negotiated by Canada which her representatives signed, and signed alone, as plenipotentiaries from the Canadian government.

I mention these matters, honourable senators, because I think it is well to keep them in our minds. It is well that we look back with pride to the great work of the Fathers of Confederation, and to the creation of a Canadian constitution. It is our serious responsibility to carry forward that conception in the best and most effective way possible.

When I first entered public life over thirty years ago, a gentleman for whom I had very high respect and who had been eminent both in public life and on the bench, presented me with a copy of the British North America Act and amendments up to that time. I recall very well the statement he made to me at the time: that this was a document which should be studied by every man in public life, because there could be no greater danger to the unity of Canada than a conflict between the federal authorities and the provinces. I was very much influenced by that statement.

I do not hold with the compact theory of confederation. The answer to that theory was very forcefully and effectively presented by the honourable senator from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris), the honourable senator from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Hayden), and the honourable senator from De Salaberry (Hon. Mr. Gouin). That theory is an