

opinion, that inasmuch as the Dominion proposals did not provide for a settlement of the land tenures, and indemnity from the Imperial Government for loss of territorial revenue, they could not consent to recommend them to the consideration of their constituents.—It will now be expected that the grounds on which this conclusion was based should be stated.—Some may consider it a matter of indifference whether the money payment by which those questions must eventually be settled, be provided by the Dominion of Canada, or by Great Britain. But to accept the offer of eight hundred thousand dollars as a free gift from the Dominion, which would not establish this Colony in a position as regards land tenures and territorial revenues, similar to that occupied by the adjoining Provinces, yet the independence of the Island would thereby be compromised, and the Union question would be discussed and finally decided, not upon its intrinsic merits, but because it might become the means of settling the land question, which is of a totally different character. The Council feels it to be their imperative duty to express their conviction that no Union can prove successful and advantageous to the people of British North America, unless it be accomplished with the free and unbiassed consent and approval of the contracting parties. England's own experience of the rebellions, the seditions and the emigration which occurred during almost three-quarters of a century which followed the two unwelcome Unions of Scotland and Ireland with her, should warn her as well as the Dominion to pause ere they commit a similar error in North America; if, therefore, the duty of settling the land question should be assumed by the Dominion, the relations between her and the Island would be ill-adapted to elicit a genuine expression of opinion; they would, in fact, closely resemble those which have heretofore subsisted in certain British boroughs between candidates and a bribed constituency. Even if a Union could be effected on the terms proposed, it is obvious that the representatives of Prince Edward Island would occupy a very invidious position when voting in the Ottawa Parliament, more especially on questions involving the use of Dominion funds for the purpose of reconciling the objections of other Colonies to Confederation.

2nd. The Council does not admit that any responsibility, with reference to the land tenures (involving a free gift of money) properly attaches to the Dominion, but they indicate as one reason for the dislike to Confederation which so generally prevails, that the interests of the Island, with reference to Public Works, have been overlooked, inasmuch as the ninety-second clause of the North America Act defines Local Works to be such as do not connect one Province with another or others, and as the people of this Island, if united to the Dominion, would contribute largely, in proportion to their numbers, to the construction and maintenance of Public Works on the mainland, from the free use of which their insular position would debar them. It is therefore indispensable, if the Dominion Government desires to recommend the question of Union to the serious consideration of the people of Prince Edward Island, that the clause referred to should be declared not to apply to Public Works generally, in the Island, and particularly to a trunk line of railway, connecting the three principal outports with each other, and the capital, such a railway being urgently required.

3rd. One of the chief advantages which it was anticipated would result from Confederation, was that greater importance and attention would attach to representations coming from the Government or Parliament of the United Colonies. The Council feel most strongly that the land question of this Colony is just such a question as requires to be urged on the attention of the Imperial Government with all the power the general Government can command; they refrain from enlarging upon the evil consequences which have resulted from the lavish improvidence of the Imperial grants; it will suffice to observe that several favorable opportunities of settling the question have been neglected or declined: during many years, most, if not all, of the Townships might have been exhausted; subsequently in 1860, the Royal Commission gave rise to sanguine hopes of a speedy and successful issue. At the Quebec Convention, a timely and unanimous remonstrance, and expression of opinion by the thirty-three delegates there assembled could not have been overlooked; recently, the sanction of the Secretary of State has been sought in vain to the introduction of a law which would compel proprietors to accept the just