

poses, might just as well be confederated to New Zealand. A great change, however, took place in this feeling, which was simply caused by its being announced that, as a condition of Confederation, Canada would build a transcontinental railway, and that British Columbia, instead of being a Province of the Dominion merely in name, would become an important part of a great nation, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and would by railway communication be able to trade with the East, and receive what she has always terribly needed, a constant supply of emigrants.

The British Columbia delegates therefore went to Ottawa prepared to stipulate—as the main condition of union—for a railway to be built from Canada to the Pacific, to be preceded by a waggon road. The Canadian Government, in anticipation of the speedy construction of the railway, considered a waggon road unnecessary, and, leaving this out, engaged to build a railway to the Pacific in ten years, and to commence it at both ends within two years. The terms of Union containing this condition were passed by the House of Commons, in a resolution, on the 1st April, 1871. Nine days afterwards, when these terms had gone completely beyond their control, the House passed another resolution to the effect that the railway was to be built by private enterprise, and that the construction of it was not to increase the then rate of taxation. The people of British Columbia received the terms of Union, as passed on April 1st, and the House of Assembly, having been dissolved, went to the polls to vote for Confederation, in utter ignorance of the resolution of April 10th, which, to their great astonishment, they now learn is to be taken as part of the terms of Union. If the House of Commons of Canada had power to pass a resolution, after it had passed the terms of Union, which was to be taken as part of them, and as binding on British Columbia, surely the legislature of this colony had the same power. Supposing then that this latter body, some days after agreeing to the terms of Union, had passed a resolution to the effect that if the railway were not commenced in two years, Canada should pay a fine of ten million dollars, would the Canadian Government consider itself now bound to pay over this sum? British Columbia has been told that it was necessary

for Sir John Macdonald's government to promise the resolution of April 10th in order to get the terms of Union passed by the House of Commons. It might have been equally necessary for the government of British Columbia to promise such a resolution as the one imagined above, in order to get the terms agreed to by the House of Assembly, but in that case, would not such a claim for compensation have been treated by the Government and people of Canada as absurd? During the last session of Parliament, Mr. Ross (probably at the suggestion of the government) brought forward a resolution similar to that of April 10th, which was passed by a very large majority, in regard to which we have simply to remark, that if the House of Commons has power by resolution to alter and amend the terms of Union with any one of the Provinces of Canada, all the terms of Union with all the Provinces are absolutely worthless. A resolution could be passed that the subsidy to Nova Scotia, as arranged at the Union, should be reduced one-half, and accordingly that Province would have to take half its former subsidy,—or that New Brunswick should only send ten members to Ottawa, and accordingly six members from that Province would lose their seats! This is absurd, it being evident that the House of Commons is utterly powerless to alter the terms of Union with any Province without the consent and agreement of that Province.

One of the lame arguments used to force the resolution of April 10th on British Columbia is this, that Mr. Trutch, who had been one of the delegates to arrange the terms of Union, but whose functions as delegate had ceased, and whose fellow delegates had gone home, was in Ottawa at the time, and was a consenting party to the resolution; and words made use of in a speech delivered by this gentleman after a dinner given to him at Ottawa are referred to as a proof of this. It so happens, however, that in the whole course of this speech, which was carefully prepared and carefully reported, not the least reference was made to the resolution, which the speaker had the good sense utterly to ignore. All he said was, that British Columbia was no Shylock, and did not expect Canada to incur a "hopeless load of taxation" to build the railway—remarks concurred in by every sensible man in British Columbia; but is this to be taken