

Pacific—a Confederacy not born in war, or baptised in blood, but a Confederacy united by the bonds of friendship, held together by the strong ties of friendly commerce and mutual interests, and cemented by a common allegiance to the throne of Great Britain.

From this quotation it would be seen that then he was in favor of a Confederation of the several British North American Provinces, but he little thought then that within two short years such a scheme would be submitted to Parliament. He was still in favor of Confederation—(hear)—but it must be a Confederation founded on a just and equitable basis, upon principles which would be alike advantageous to all parts and injurious to none. If any other kind of Confederation were agreed upon, it would contain within itself the seeds of decay and dissolution. The project had been elaborately presented to the House by the gallant knight at the head of the Government, and by his able colleague, the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands, and what reasons had they alleged in favor of it? He confessed he had been quite surprised at some of the arguments of the former. That hon. gentleman had stated that if the scheme were rejected, whether we would or would not, Canada would be forced by violence into the American Union, or placed upon an inclined plane which would carry us there. Now when men occupying high positions like the hon. member, assumed the responsibility of giving utterance to such startling opinions, they ought to be prepared to support them with very cogent reasons.

HON. SIR E. P. TACHÉ—I am quite ready to give them.

HON. MR. CURRIE—If the case were as represented, it must be because we are quite defenceless, and that except in union with the Lower Provinces we were at the mercy of the United States. But what did the honorable member mean by the inclined plane? For his part he had not heard of any desire on the part of the people of this province to change their political institutions and turn from the glorious flag under which many of them had fought and bled. Had anything been heard from abroad, to the effect that unless we accepted this scheme, England would cast us off or let us slide down the inclined plane? (Laughter.) Yet these were the sole, or at least the chief, reasons alleged by that honorable member. Let us then ask ourselves whether the scheme provided a remedy for the threatened evils. Would Canada indeed be so physically strengthened sea-ward and land-ward by this alliance,

that in the event of aggression on the part of the United States, we would be rendered quite safe? It was easy to say that union gave strength, but would this union really give us strength? He could understand that union with a people contiguous would do so, but union with provinces 1,500 miles apart at the extreme points, was a very different thing, and more likely to be a source of weakness. In his mind it was like tying a small twine at the end of a large rope and saying it strengthened the whole line. When the honorable member said that Canada would be supported by all the military power of the Lower Provinces, we should not run away with the idea that this meant anything. What were the facts? Upon looking at the census of those provinces he found that the male population between the ages of 21 and 50—the extreme limits at which men bore arms—was 128,457, of which number 63,289 were chiefly employed on the water; that is, in the coasting trade and the fisheries, leaving 65,000 to assist in the defence of Canada. (Hear, hear.) Now, suppose a draft of one-third of these was made for military exigencies—and one-third would be a large proportion—we would have less than 22,000 men available for the service. Why, that would not be enough to defend their own frontier from aggression. Without referring to the causes which had led to the formation of the present Government, or to the extraordinary conduct of some of the public men composing it, he must nevertheless allude to the express objects they professed to have in view in coming together. And the principal object was a scheme of federation, but not the scheme now offered to the House. If he understood the matter at all, the Government was organized on the basis of a Confederation of Upper and Lower Canada first, in which Confederation the Lower Provinces might afterwards be admitted if they wished it.

HON. MR. CAMPBELL—Not so.

HON. MR. CURRIE—He was not surprised at the dissent of the Honorable Commissioner of Crown Lands, for the leaders in both Houses had placed the larger object, that is the organization of a general Confederation, as the primary one. But the basis of the organization had been reduced to writing, and he held in his hand the paper which recapitulated the conditions. They were as follows:—The Government are prepared to pledge themselves to bring in a measure, next session, for the purpose of removing existing difficulties by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will