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Forty-one Years of Confederation.

Canadians should all acknowledge the sagacity, the patriotism, the forgetfulness of selfish and partisan considerations on the part of our statesmen to which are due the inception of a project of British American confederation and the carrying of it to a successful issue.

It took many years of agitation and discussion to secure the passing of the Act in 1867 which has since so largely influenced the destinies of

In Upper Canada the Family Compact and Clergy Reserves were the causes of many disputes. A large portion of the French population of Lower Canada were dissatisfied with the then existing state of affairs, and in Nova Scotia business conditions were stagnant and lands neglected.

The union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841 followed and was the preliminary step for the larger consolidation. From that date forward the British Colonies were stirred by persistent agitation.

As early as 1860 Sir Charles Tupper delivered a lecture at St. John in favor of the movement. Confederation was the subject of many ad-

strong party men, but winning the approval of posterity. Sir John Macdonald's strong character and political sagacity made him an important leader in all the preliminary negotiations. At the Quebec conference in 1864 he well expressed the feeling of the Unionists in these words:—

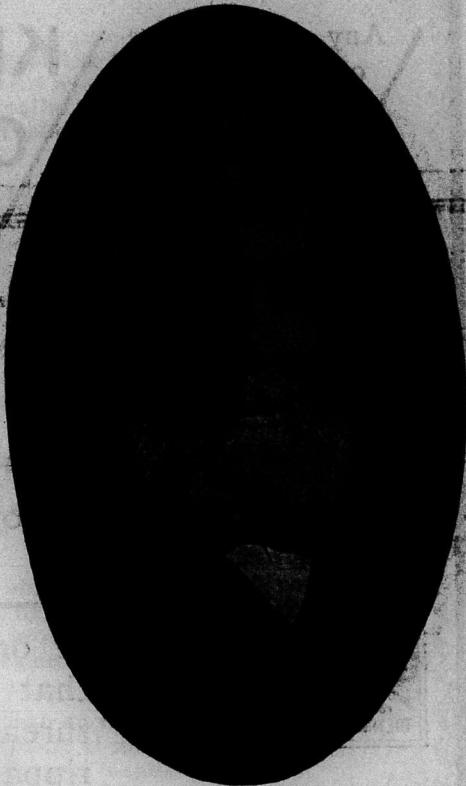
"Our present isolated and defenceless position is no doubt serious and embarrassing to England. For the sake of securing peace to ourselves



THE LATE SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD.
Premier July 1, 1867, to Nov. 6, 1873, and from Oct. 17, 1873, to June 6, 1891.

British America. Away back in the year 1690 Sir Francis Nicholson propounded the idea of a union of the Anglo American Colonies on this continent. In 1775 William Smith earned the title of "Grandfather of Confederation" by proposing a plan of union, but in the excited temper of the American Colonies at the movement he was rewarded for his pains by banishment.

From that time on the idea of a Canadian Confederation found favor in what is now Canada, the strongest argument in the first half of last century being found in the report of Lord Durham in 1839. That splendid statesman found the colonies torn with jealousy and dissension.



THE LATE HON. ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.
Premier Nov. 7, 1873, to June 6, 1878.

dressess and speeches, and of memorable conferences at Charlottetown and Quebec in 1864. The delegates to the latter meeting are known to history as the "Fathers of Confederation," of whom only Sir Charles Tupper and Hon. A. A. McDonald of Prince Edward Island now survive. Hon. George Brown joined the Government of his life-long political opponent, Sir John A. Macdonald, in order to accomplish the union, thereby earning the displeasure of many



THE LATE SIR JOHN J. C. ABBOTT.
Premier June 16, 1891, to Nov. 24, 1892.

and our posterity we must make ourselves powerful. The great security of peace is to convince the world of our strength by being united."

A few months later he said in the House:—"If we do not take advantage of the time, if we show ourselves unequal to the occasion, it may never return, and we shall hereafter bitterly and unavailingly regret having failed to embrace the happy opportunity now offered to found a great nation under the fostering care of Great Britain and our sovereign lady, Queen Victoria."

Meantime the feeling in the Maritime Provinces was in a hesitating and uncertain state. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick entered the un-

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