

does not shed its light upon any people on the face of the earth enjoying more liberty than my fellow countrymen of French extraction. And my last words to the doubters, to the scoffers, is that freedom is worth fighting for and worth dying for.

But, Sir, these men will not be reached by any noble sentiment; perhaps we can reach them by appealing to their selfish interests; perhaps they will be found sensitive in their pockets if they are not sensitive otherwise. What would be the condition of Canada to-day, and of the province of Quebec in particular, if England were to lose the supremacy of the seas? Canada to-day is a prosperous country. Quebec is a very prosperous province; but is not that prosperity due to our trade with England? Let the market of Great Britain be lost—and it would be lost if the British supremacy on the sea were lost—and the prosperity of Canada and the prosperity of Quebec would be affected for years, if not for ever.

Sir, in the settlement of political problems it is very seldom that a solution can be reached on pure abstract principles. When a conclusion is arrived at, it is reached by taking into consideration several points of view and a common ground has to be found upon which the different schools of thought, the different prejudices and passions, and the different shades of public opinion can be united. That is true everywhere, it is truer in Canada perhaps, than in any other portion of the earth. I stated a moment ago that it was the report of Lord Durham which had been the foundation of the system of local self-government. It may be considered a singular fact that the report of Lord Durham was received by the French Canadians of that day with pained surprise. The reason is known to those who have studied the history of that period. Friend of liberty as he was, broad as he was in his conceptions, far-visionsed as events showed him to have been, Lord Durham himself did not appreciate the whole effect of liberal institutions. Coming to Canada at a time when the very atmosphere was reeking with rebellion, he formed a hasty judgment upon the French population of that day, which he expressed in vehement and somewhat haughty language. He thought they could not be reconciled to British rule, and stated in his report that the conditions were such that the two provinces should be united, so that French Canada should be ruled by the stern and relentless hand of an English-speaking majority. It is not to be wondered at that when the report was made known in Canada it not only caused, as I have said, pained surprise, but produced a feeling of injustice and wrong. Sir, I repeat that Lord Durham, friend of liberty as he was, did not realize

the full force of free institutions, did not perceive, as other men perceived at that time—men who, on this subject had a better conception of things than he had—that there are principles superior to race feeling, that there are principles that can unite men of all origins in a common aspiration for the welfare of their common country. Such a man was Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine; such a man was Robert Baldwin. When the provinces were united, Lafontaine, speaking of the Act of union, characterized it:

As unjust and despotic in this that it was imposed on us without our consent; in this that it deprives lower Canada of its legitimate number of representatives; in this that it deprives us of the use of our language in the proceedings of the legislature against the justice of treaties and the pledged word of the Governor General; in this that it forces us to pay against our consent, a debt which one had not contracted; in this that it allows the executive power to take illegal hold, under the name of civil list, of an enormous portion of the revenues of the country.

This was a severe arraignment, and unfortunately it was only too true, but what was the conclusion arrived at by Lafontaine? Did he say that the French Canadians should not accept the Act of union? No. Men there were at that time who immediately started an agitation for the repeal of the union, and those men were joined some years afterwards, when he came back from exile, by Papineau, a strong man, an eloquent man, a man of intense nature, and whom the very intensity of his nature always carried beyond the point into impracticable conclusions. Lafontaine was a different man, he was a broad man, he understood the situation. The Act of union was not satisfactory to his fellow-countrymen, he thought it was an injustice, but he accepted it, because principles there were by which every injustice could be rectified. It is upon those principles, Mr. Speaker, that we rely. In the address which I have just read, addressed to the electors of Terrebonne, he continued as follows:

The reformers in the two provinces are an immense majority. . . . Our cause is the same. The interest of the reformers in the two provinces is to meet in the legislative ground, in a spirit of peace, of union, of unity, of fraternity. Unity of action is more than ever necessary. I have no doubt that the reformers of Upper Canada, feel, as we do, the need of it, and that in the first session of the legislature, they will give us unequivocal proof of it, which, I hope, will be the pledge of a confidence both reciprocal and durable.

Sir, in these noble sentiments he found an auxiliary in that other great and true Canadian and British subject, Robert Bald-