

that the system of granting subsidies to the Provinces is both *degrading* and *demoralizing*.

It is then quite clear that if Mr. Blake had held the helm of State, the Provinces would never have had the *better terms*. The Government would have been satisfied with subsidizing railways in Ontario, as Mr. MacKenzie did, leaving the other Provinces to manage their affairs as best they might ; the great enterprises undertaken by them would have been neglected, and instead of seeing prosperity and progress prevailing every where, we would witness nothing but poverty and the *statu quo*.

A like programme would have seriously imperilled the autonomy of the Provinces ; uneasiness and hardship would have bred disaffection, and gradually, the Provinces, dissatisfied with their fate, would have sought to be separated from the Confederation, with a view to a better future elsewhere.

I will resume my remarks in a few words.

The Legislatures and Parliament are each, in their own sphere of action, sovereign powers.

Every infringement on the part of one of the powers on the ground reserved to the others, is an act, the nullity of which every body can invoke.

None of these powers can acquire a right which it has not, either by possession or by prescription.

The only two means at our disposal to prevent Parliament from exceeding its powers, by legislating on matters exclusively within our province, are the appeal to our Courts of Justice, or to the British Parliament.

All other means may serve to breed a passing agitation, and promote party ends ; but, can be conducive to no other serious result than that of deceiving the public.

No term of existence of a legislative measure *ultra vires* could give it a legal effect. It could always be attacked by the injured party, *contra hostem aeterna sit autoritas*. No prescription obtains on this subject. However so long the usurpation, it must yield to the first attack. This proposition cannot be contested. This is, moreover, Mr. Blake's opinion, as is evidenced by his letter to the Secretary for the Colonies, on the question of disallowance, dated 22nd December, 1875. I quote the passage which relates to the present question :

"The powers of Provincial Legislatures are, by their