

Chr. Weekly British Colonist  
Wednesday May 3 d. 1871

The Great Duty of the Hour

Having dwelt upon the advantageous character of the terms upon which this Colony is about to become a Province of the Dominion of Canada, and having intimated the indebtedness of the people to those through whom and from whom these beneficial terms have been obtained, and the duty of fitting recognition of that indebtedness, we now come to consider what may justly be regarded as the great duty of the hour. The duty, let us believe, glorious dispensation upon which the Colony is now entering is by no means one of rest-and-be-thankful. Quite the contrary, indeed. If Confederation brings in its right hand material advantages and political liberty, it brings in its left greater responsibility. It has been claimed, and with much show of reason, that, in a political sense, the people of British Columbia have hitherto been slaves. A one-man power has levied and expended the taxes. The representative of the Queen has been the mere agent, to speak of Donning Street, and the affairs of the Colony have been administered by a power wholly independent of the people. Under these circumstances it is scarcely surprising that the people should have given way to a spirit of fault-finding and political discontent—that their natural self-reliance should have been somewhat undermined. Political slavery, like physical slavery, enervates and unmans the men in a greater or less degree to become the architects of their own fortunes. Well, Confederation knocks off the political chains with which the people have been bound these many years. It brings with it the fullest political liberty consistent with solid constitutional wellbeing. It confers upon the people self-government, the full control of all local affairs. It surely requires no great effort to discern the gravity of the situation—the responsibility thus involved. Nor can it be expected that a people so long enslaved will at once fully realize the importance and responsibility of their new-born liberty. The change is so sudden, the transition so great, that it may be deemed to take some little time to recover that alertness and vigor of thought and action, so essential to the proper exercise of the powers of self-government. It should be the object of every true patriot at this critical juncture, this turning-point in the history of the Colony, to arouse the people to a sense of the great duty of the hour, to endeavour to bring them to a practical realization of individual responsibility—the fact that each has a distinct duty to perform in shaping and executing the new system—a duty which every man must perform for himself, which no one else can perform for him. A new Government has to be formed; and it has to be formed by the votes of the people. In order to vote every man must, by his own exertions, place himself upon the roll of registered voters; and this must be done within the tenth day of May and the tenth day of June next. The man who neglects to do this will have failed to do his duty, his individual part in constructing a people's government, in working out that system for which the people have so long and anxiously sought. The first step is to register—to qualify to vote. To neglect that is to neglect all. Hence the paramount importance of taking the first step. The second step is to vote; and upon the manner of exercising the right to vote most chiefly depend the success or non-success of responsible government in British Columbia. It has long been objected that this Colony was not quite prepared to work out that system, that public opinion was not sufficiently formed, that the people would not take that careful interest in political matters so essential to the successful working. The people are now called upon to demonstrate their fitness to manage their own local affairs, and British Columbia expects that every man this day will do his duty. In the past the people have not always been careful as to how they cast their votes. In some instances they have even gone the length of expressing by their votes detestation and contempt for a mock system which gave them no real voice in the management of their own local affairs. But it is of the utmost importance to remember that the new government will be just what the people make it—that they need no longer stand men to oppose a hired government which shall have ceased to exist. The work is no longer one of destruction; it is one of creation. It is not one of pulling down a bad system; it is one of building up a good system. Every true colonist will now exercise his freeman's franchise with an earnest view to obtaining, not combustible, explosive, destructive material, but good, sound, wholesome material which can be used with good results in the construction of the new political edifice. It ought now to be the

aim and ambition of every constituency to seek a representative fit to be Cabinet Minister. And unless the people will do this, unless they are prepared to do their part in constructing a system which must rest upon the only firm basis of free constitutional government—the people—it is perfectly certain that the attempt to work out responsible government in the Pacific Province cannot be successful. And upon whom will the consequences of failure fall? Upon the people. Who will then, be to blame? The people. For their own sake, for the credit of this great country, for the good reputation of the Dominion, let the people of British Columbia come up to the great duty of the hour in a thoughtful, sober, intelligent, earnest and patriotic spirit, remembering that the eyes of the other Provinces, of the parent Empire, of a long line of Provinces, are fixed upon them. Remembering too the vital importance of beginning the task that they, as pioneers, are called upon to lay the foundations of future empire on the British Pacific, let them be faithful to how they build. Let every man possess of the requisite qualification place his name on the Register. Having decided that let him make a discreet use of his vote.

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The Ballot in England.  
The Ballot Bill introduced by the Government in the House of Commons on the 20th ult. forms the principal measure of the session, and is rapidly changing the system of voting. The substance of the bill is as follows:—  
1. The bill shall apply to municipalities as well as parliamentary elections.  
2. No voting paper except the official paper shall be used—that is to say, the object of the bill shall not be defeated by the use of a somewhat similar paper, which would enable it to be used in any way the vote had been given.  
3. The voting paper shall not be given to the voter until he enters the voting booth.  
4. The voter is not to be permitted to put any mark upon the voting paper except that which is necessary to show for whom the vote is given; and in the event of that regulation being violated, the vote will be cancelled.  
5. The returning officer shall give out his paper to each voter, shall impress it with a stamp, the character of which shall be bound to keep secret, and which shall not be used again until a certain fixed time shall have expired. Then, when the boxes come to be opened, each unopened voting paper shall be rejected as void.  
6. When a voting paper has once been put into the ballot-box, the box shall not be opened except under such precautions as shall secure the infallibility of the vote.  
7. Where in a case of re-opening for the question of the number of votes it is found a vote is bad, it shall be struck off from the total of the candidate for whom it has been recorded; and also, where an elector voted for him, the vote shall be kept aside, and under certain circumstances counted for the candidate in whose favor he had intended to vote.  
8. The same penalties shall be attached to personation that attach to bribery and treating. The candidate shall lose his seat for procuring or attempting to procure personation.  
9. Any candidate who does not include all his expenses in his election return; or who with his own hands has paid expenses which ought to have passed through the hands of his agent, shall lose his seat.  
10. The use of public houses as committee rooms during the progress of elections is prohibited.  
11. The old plan of nominating candidates, and making the final declaration of the poll, is abolished.  
12. The expenses of the returning officer shall be paid out of the local rate.

Canadian Pacific Railway.  
From the Ottawa Times, April 3rd.  
It is a happy thing for Canada, and we believe we may add that it is a happy thing for all who desire to see British institutions maintained upon this continent, that these gentlemen (The Opposition in the House of Commons) are not possessed of more influence than they are. If they had succeeded in their efforts and managed to postpone any action for the present in relation to British Columbia, we might have given up all hope of union in the future. The question is one which admits of no further delay. Our fellow colonists in British Columbia have waited long enough, and a change in their political condition is imperatively demanded. Not taken with a view to the Confederation of the Atlantic Provinces, was there more danger in delay than there now is? regards the admission of British Columbia. And what said the Hon. Mr Brown then, the man who now in common with his friends in Parliament has striven to defer the union of British Columbia with Canada? He said "Sir, the man who strives for the postponement of this measure on any ground, is doing what he can to kill it almost as effectually as if he voted against it."

These words apply with equal force now, and describe what the members of the Opposition are doing in reference to the admission of British Columbia. They have done all they can to 'kill it,' to render it impossible, and to throw all that vast territory which extends from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast into the hands of the Americans.

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whether the leaders of the Opposition are remarkably obtuse or are addicted to wilful misstatements. Perhaps, on the whole, we ought to give them the benefit of the doubt, and assume that lack of will rather than lack of principle is what ails them. But it is impossible without admitting one of these hypotheses to account for the extraordinary manner in which they and their master's organ at Toronto misrepresent the statements made by Ministers in reference to the British Columbia resolutions and the Pacific Railway. To assert, as it has been asserted, that Sir Francis Hinck, or the Hon. Mr. Morris, hold that although not one of these resolutions could be altered still his seal being once affixed to the bargain, Parliament could at any time withhold the means necessary to give the scheme effect is altogether untrue. Neither of these honourable gentlemen said a word of the kind. What Mr Morris said, and what the Finance Minister endorsed, was that the question now was whether or not British Columbia should be invited to join the Union, and whether or not the railway should not be constructed, and the honourable gentleman added that the House must be aware that before a dollar could be expended or an acre of land granted, a scheme would have to be submitted to and endorsed by the House, and therefore the whole matter would be within the control of Parliament.

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Canada on the Railway.

We have devoted considerable to a report of the Confederation in the Dominion House of Commons and to the opinions of the Press bearing more directly upon question of an inter-oceanic route. Those who have given these reports opinions a careful perusal will probably have reached the common conclusion that all parties in Canada, to the words of the leader of Opposition, recognize in the way "an urgent political duty," and that the determined taken in opposition to the terms proposed by the Government really no higher aim than a seat of "Ministerial benches." It seems a non-charitable to come to such a conclusion; and yet it appears to us inevitable. Indeed the leader of Opposition was heard to say last night that he was in favor of the generally, that he was in favor of a railway in particular, but that if appeared to be an opportunity for of ousting the Government upon question he and his party might advantage of it. The sequel goes to show that he and his party did eagerly and determinedly avail themselves of what they doubtless felt to be a favorable opportunity to get from the old shades of the Opposition. Fortunately for British Columbia, as we think, for the Dominion, attempt failed. That the game legitimate one for a political party for the effects of office is not so rarely won, that so respect a party as the Opposition is the Dominion Parliament had selected a question for the trial of their strength less likely to succeed than their present claim. As a cookery book said to manager of one of the inferior political theatres, "We don't, except grammar here; but you might as well your success. To admit that the Canadian Pacific Railway is an urgent political necessity" was to admit all was lost; the hollows of the opposition offered to the terms; for it is to be marked that throughout the whole debate no decided ground was stated to be taken against any other in the list. There are probably few Canadian Parliament better at grasp the whole scheme of the AT Galt and Mr. Alexander Mack. Having admitted the urgent political necessity of the railway, they scarcely hope to get credit for standing in the way of it. It is well known by the Hon. Mr. Dinkins, in the course of debate, that to pause in the westward direction of empire was to go back the distance. Another Cabinet Minister an apt illustration of this, in regard to the Confederation, said that they had in the Confederation, but upon this, it was made quickly or break through, ing else for the Treasury benches and now that the terms have been accepted the least and interest of the nation are bound up in their fulfilment, it is hoped here of the Opposition will vie with the Government in an earnest patriotic effort to render the union brought about as happy and as good results to the Dominion at large united energies of the young nation, as we trust, by the parent empire, to do it. It is certainly to be hoped position to the terms will be decided as division in Parliament. It would not be an easy matter to make the an issue at the approaching general election; it is not improbable that some might be gained at the expense of the majority in the public mind; but the ranks of the Opposition; but it above Canada from the self-imposed position of the terms of union. It alienate the people of the Pacific at a time and under circumstances unity and concord are essential. It has given British Columbia good terms carry out her engagements in the loyal spirit and the Pacific Province soon receive even those who may have seemed to be their duty to oppose terms that they were no better than served.

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