

donald, although a Conservative, acquiesced cheerfully in the passing away of practices and institutions which had served their purpose. He had abandoned the theories of the old-time Conservatives; he had assisted in the curtailment of the powers of the governors; he had voted for the election of the legislative council; he had opposed representation by population; he had given up the double majority; he had forced the settlement of the clergy reserves question; he had insisted on the arrangement of the seigniorial tenure dispute; he respected the past, but he also respected the future. He was always thinking of the next session, the next election, the next generation, the next phase of public opinion and public affairs. That the driving-wheel of the machinery of state makes large revolutions he knew very well. He was not impatient for it to come round again; but he knew it would come, and he was always ready for the opportunity it afforded.

In 1864 began the movement which ended in the confederation of the British North American Provinces. Professor Goldwin Smith, in reply to those who make claim for this or that man that he was "the father of confederation," invariably says, "*No; deadlock was the father of confederation.*" And this is what he means.

On the 16th of May, 1863, the Parliament of Canada was dissolved by Lord Monck, the reform party being in power. At the close of the session of 1863, on the 12th of May, the Governor-General, in his speech dissolving the Parliament, said in general terms:—

(1.) That it was not possible to conduct the public business in a satisfactory manner under existing circumstances.

(2.) That two successive administrations had failed to obtain the confidence of the legislature.

(3.) That these facts had made a dissolution necessary.

The causes of the troubles thus alluded to by the governor were as follows:—

On May 20, 1862, the government of Macdonald and Cartier (Conservative) was defeated, by the defection of some of Cartier's Quebec following, on the militia bill; and the ministry resigned. On May 24 the Sandfield Macdonald-Sicotte ministry was sworn into office. On May 8, 1863, in the succeeding session, Mr. John A. Macdonald carried a vote of want of confidence in this new ministry. The defeated ministers, acting within their right, advised the governor to dissolve the house, and Parliament was dissolved accordingly on the 16th of May, 1863, as above stated.

The elections were held in June, and the Liberal government was sustained by a very small majority. After a sharp parliamentary struggle, the new Liberal government, finding its position difficult to maintain, and thinking to embarrass its opponents, resigned. When two other men had declined the dangerous task of forming an administration, a member of the upper house, Sir Étienne Taché, undertook the forlorn hope and formed the second Taché-Macdonald administration, Conservative. This new government was defeated, by a vote of sixty to fifty-eight, on a test question; making the fourth ministry condemned in four years. The Governor-General gave his new and defeated ministers power to dissolve once more, a most troublesome and financially ruinous process, though perfectly regular and constitutional; but this time the dissolution did not take place.

At this critical point, when parties were so nicely balanced that neither could form a stable administration, Mr. George Brown, the reform leader, who was a sincere and able advocate of a union of all the British North American Provinces, gave it to be understood, by means of a communication to the late Hon. Alexander Morris, that he was not