

propound. Mr. Roebuck, who had at one time represented the colony in this country, with his characteristic wrong-headedness, was amongst the most noteworthy of those who expressed the view that the sooner Canada was separated from Great Britain the better for her and for us. Opinion has grown. Facts have fought for the Imperialist dogma. I cannot conceive that to-night there will be many in this Reform Club who will be prepared, after what they have heard, to get up and endorse that opinion. An additional incentive to confederation was no doubt the anomaly of the position of the North American Provinces. Responsible government had been conceded to each of them; they had popular representatives; taxation by representative bodies; their officials were appointed by local governments, and only the Governor was nominated by the Crown. Like the Province of Australia, they were isolated, their tariffs were different, each province was foreign to the other. The custom houses on the frontiers interposed between States under the same Imperial Government. Each province had its distinct postal regulations. There was no harmony of action, as there was no unity or sympathy in government. In these different communities the consciousness of their anomalous position no doubt gave opportunity and strength to that party—never a very large one, but occasionally a very active one—which was in favor of annexation to the United States. Independence then was of course a dream. But when it was suggested that Canada should be left to its fate by the Government and the Empire of which she was one of the brightest jewels, men's minds turned by general consent to the question whether nothing could be done to unite her into a nation capable of supporting itself should it be obliged to become independent, or, in the hoped-for continuity of its relations to the British Empire, able to insist upon and maintain those relations on a more equitable basis. For ten years, from 1854 to 1864, here and there men of some eminence in the various provinces propounded ideas of confederation, but their speeches led to no practical results. The solution was brought about by a dead-lock in the Legislature of Canada, which then