

sary to formulate an attractive political program as an alternative to the competing policies of the Reform and Annexation parties in favor of reciprocity and annexation respectively. The plan of an intercolonial union apparently satisfied this demand. It made a favorable appeal to the diverse and conflicting elements of the League; to the imperialists it held out the prospect of preserving the British connection; to the nationalists, an equal prospect of ultimate independence; to the Orangemen it appealed as a means of overcoming the domination of the French; to the business public it promised economic relief and a larger market.

Throughout the debates but scant attention was paid to the question of the nature of the proposed union. Although the majority of the speakers spoke of the union as a federal union, there was evidently a division of opinion among the delegates in regard to the matter; and the convention carefully refrained from deciding the question in advance. The delegates, in truth, were not in a position to discuss even the most elementary outlines of the suggested union. The scheme was practically new to all of them. They had made no preliminary study of the question and had only a rudimentary knowledge of the principles of federalism.

Soon after the close of the convention the committee on union opened up negotiations with the Maritime Provinces for the holding of a conference. But at the very outset, the committee found themselves in difficulty. They had no official standing and not even a representative character. To make matters worse the governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were of the Reform party. The Hon. Joseph Howe had already denounced the League in unsparing terms. The Conservatives in the Maritime Provinces could render little assistance to their friends in Canada, for they were a beaten and discredited party. To the best of the committee's knowledge there was not a single political association in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland with which the committee could deal. Personal communications were accordingly addressed "to prominent and influential citizens in Halifax," inviting their aid and co-operation in promoting the plan of an intercolonial union. But the response was far from encouraging.