

April 12, 1872

carrying out the projected Pacific Railway. (*Hear, hear.*)

As to the finances of the country, it must be gratifying to all to know that our resources are such as to enable us to meet without embarrassment all the claims to be made upon us for the great public improvements foreshadowed in His Excellency's speech.

It is a strong evidence of the great advantages that we derive from Confederation—advantages, I may say, that were scarcely anticipated. I entertain no doubt that if these improvements are carried out we shall be able to assume the proud position of being considered a great Nationality, but still retaining our connection with the British Crown, to shine as one of its brightest jewels in time of peace, and be a source of strength in time of war.

Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE then rose and said he proposed to offer a few remarks upon the Speech from the Throne:

In the first place he begged to offer his congratulations to the two young members who had in so creditable a manner moved and seconded the Address, and to tender his own welcome to them to the House.

The admission of British Columbia was a matter of sincere congratulation to himself and to those who usually acted with him (*Hear, hear.*) because he believed it was a geographical necessity to the Dominion and in the interests of Canada that all branches of the British Family on this continent should be united under the same government.

He made those remarks the more readily because he was quite aware of the misrepresentations that had been circulated so industriously by some of the highest persons in that province during the recent elections, making it appear that there was a very hostile feeling on the part of the Opposition here to the acquisition of that colony.

Their opposition was not to the introduction of the colony, but to the proposition to impose conditions that were utterly impossible of performance and utterly beyond the resources of the country. Even the hon. gentleman opposite, who led the House, admitted it was impracticable—by the extraordinary resolution he proposed at the last moment, to let some of his followers down easily who were disposed to offer some resistance to the general measure.

With reference to the delay in calling the House together, he considered it a most extraordinary statement to make in the Speech from the Throne that at the instance of the Imperial Government the meeting of the House was purposely delayed. The House had a right to know what was the nature of those communications: whether the Imperial Government acted upon their own volition in the matter, or whether, which was more probable, they had acted upon suggestions from this side of the water that it would be extremely convenient if the Imperial Government would only say that it was

desirable the House should not be called together as soon as usual. (*Hear, hear.*) Such an instance had occurred before now, and he would not be surprised to find that, after all, the real reasons for the delay were of the most trivial character.

As to the Speech, he considered it remarkable only for the absence of important measures which the interests of the country required. In fact the policy of the Government could not be found in the Speech; they were obliged to go beyond the Speech to the speeches and pamphlets of Ministers outside the House to find out what the views of Government were.

One irrepressible member of the Government in a recent speech at Montreal declared that the Government had determined on deepening Lake St. Peter, yet there was no reference to that matter in the Speech.

There was another speech by a member of the Government to which he felt bound to refer. Before we had completed Confederation, before we had time to consider the means that we should take to develop our great resources, we found another member of the Cabinet deliberately discussing in public the probability and wisdom of an entire separation from the Mother Country, and the establishment of some other form of government more congenial, he presumed, to that hon. gentleman and some of his associates. (*Hear, hear.*) He alluded of course to the Secretary of State for the Provinces (Hon. Mr. Howe). In the extraordinary pamphlet issued by that gentleman, he found the following language:—

“I do not desire to anticipate the full and ample discussion which Parliament will give to England's recent diplomatic efforts to buy her own peace at the sacrifice of our interests, or of that ‘comedy of errors’ into which she has blundered, but this I may say, that the time is rapidly approaching when Canadians and Englishmen must have a clear and distinct understanding as to the hopes and obligations of the future.

If Imperial policy is to cover the whole ground upon the faith of which our forefathers settled on and improved the land, then let that be understood and we shall know what to do.

But if shadows, clouds and darkness are to rest upon the future; if thirty millions of Britons are to hoard their ‘racial counters’ within two small islands, gather round them the troops and war ships of the empire and leave four millions of Britons to face forty millions and to defend a frontier of three thousand miles, then let us know what they are and our future policy will be governed by that knowledge.”

This was the most extraordinary and unjustifiable language ever held by a Minister of the Crown, and was utterly unwarranted by circumstances. That minister seemed to think that the forty millions on the other side of the line were a horde of barbarous savages