

in conjunction with my Ministers, to prepare and submit to you a measure for the solution of the constitutional problem, the discussion of which has for some years agitated this Province.

A careful consideration of the general position of *British North America* induced the conviction that the circumstances of the times afforded the opportunity not merely for the settlement of a question of Provincial politics, but also for the simultaneous creation of a new Nationality.

Preliminary negotiations were opened by me with the Lieutenant Governors of the other Provinces of *British North America*, and the result was that a meeting was held at *Quebec*, in the month of October last, composed of delegates from those Colonies, representing all shades of political party in their several communities, nominated by the Lieutenant Governors of their respective Provinces, who assembled here, with the sanction of the Crown and at my invitation, to confer with the members of the Canadian Ministry on the possibility of effecting a Union of all the Provinces of *British North America*.

This Conference, after lengthened deliberations, arrived at the conclusion that a Federal Union of these Provinces was feasible and desirable, and the result of its labors is a plan of Constitution for the proposed Union, embodied in a series of resolutions, which, with other papers relating to the subject, I have directed to be laid before you.

The general design of a Union, and the particular plan by which it is proposed to carry that intention into effect, have both received the cordial approbation of the Imperial Government.

An Imperial Act of Parliament will be necessary in order to give effect to the contemplated Union of the Colonies, and I have been officially informed by the Secretary of State that Her Majesty's Ministers will be prepared to introduce a Bill for that purpose into the Imperial Parliament, so soon as they shall have been notified that the proposal has received the sanction of the Legislatures representing the several Provinces affected by it.

In commending to your attention this subject, the importance of which to yourselves and to your descendants it is impossible to exaggerate, I would claim for it your calm, earnest and impartial consideration.

With the public men of *British North America* it now rests to decide whether the vast tract of country which they inhabit shall be consolidated into a State, combining within its area all the elements of national greatness, providing for the security of its component parts and contributing to the strength and stability of the Empire; or whether the several Provinces of which it is constituted shall remain in their present fragmentary and isolated condition, comparatively powerless for mutual aid, and incapable of undertaking their proper share of Imperial responsibility.

In the discussion of an issue of such moment, I fervently pray that your minds may be guided to conclusions which shall redound to the honour of our Sovereign, to the welfare of Her subjects, and to your own reputation as Patriots and Statesmen.

On motion of the Honorable Mr. Attorney General *Cartier*, seconded by the Honorable Mr. *Brown*,

*Ordered*, That the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both Houses of the Provincial Legislature be taken into consideration on Monday next.

*Ordered*, That the Votes and Proceedings of this House be printed, being first perused by Mr. Speaker, and that he do appoint the printing thereof; and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

*Resolved*, That Select Standing Committees of this House for the present Session be appointed for the following purposes:—1. On Privileges and Elections.—2. On Expiring Laws.—3. On Railways, Canals and Telegraph Lines.—4. On Miscellaneous Private Bills.—5. On Standing Orders.—6. On Printing.—7. On Contingencies.—8. On Public Accounts.—9. On Banking and Commerce.—10. On Immigration and Colonization; which said Committees shall severally be empowered to examine and enquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by the House, and to report from time to time their observations and opinions thereon; with power to send for persons, papers and records.