

minor role, while recognizing that we could have done a more worthy part. Our Provinces could not have for the moment engaged all their energies as the Dominion, which they form, has done, and we could not, further, have brought to the motherland the moral force which, with that of the other daughter states, has been of enormous value to her in steadying her in the high courage she has shown in this time of peril to liberty and all else that is dear to humanity.

The event of fifty years ago has had another far-reaching effect. It may be said, I believe, without contradiction, that the example set by the Canadian Provinces has in no small degree promoted the foundation, in other parts of the Empire, of the Commonwealth, the Dominion and the Union that to-day make Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, with Canada, as it were, buttresses of the Empire against whatever may happen, whether it be the tottering or the decay that comes to all things in old age, or the war storms of the world.

They, who laboured in bringing about that Confederation, therefore, performed a priceless service. They did not wholly forecast the future and estimate the effect of their action. The result they strove to reach was not one of choice but determined by necessity. They effected it in order to solve difficulties which were intolerable and which threatened to promote such disunion as would ultimately imperil the continuation of the British status in North America. They were not wholly optimistic as to the final effect of their efforts. It is easy now, in examining all the details of the agitation they led to achieve the result they had in view, to detect in their hopefulness a minor note, an overtone derived from their despair regarding the conditions from which they wished Canada to escape, a note of uncertainty as to the full success of the organization they brought about. What they sought to avoid or abolish seemed to them fraught with more danger than would beset the future under any new conditions, and, in consequence, they, with a courage that time has abundantly justified, loyally endeavoured to make the Dominion which they brought into being a success in unifying our scattered peoples and making them a nation with ideals in harmony with the traditions and standards of the British race the world over. That they could not and did not peer far into the future was what might have been expected. Men, and especially those who concern themselves with affairs of national polity, rarely attempt to divine the future, at least, that part of it immediately beyond their generation, and, if they do, they more rarely order their action for that distant time. It is, on the whole, wise that this should be so. "New occasions