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THE CONFERENCE SCHEME—A FARCE. ^O

However much we may feel disposed to dispute the soundness of the scheme agreed upon at the recent Conference, we cannot but admire the capacity for business which the delegates have evinced. The continued opportunities for social enjoyment so seductively placed before them, seem in nowise to have interfered with their praiseworthy resolution to make pleasure subservient to business. The amount of work they have got through is really enormous, and we must perforce conclude, that were our party leaders to pull more together upon questions of Provincial importance, our public works would progress more favorably than hitherto. It would seem that, the delirium of feverish partizanship once allowed to subside, the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, and the Leader of the Opposition, are useful, hard-working, men of business. The Federation scheme, involving as it does a complication of issues, each in itself of a magnitude greater than any with which we have yet, as a people, had to deal, cannot even be approached without a sense of the deepest responsibility. And we must in common charity assume, that the delegates from this Province were fully conscious of what they undertook, when they assented to the propositions drawn up at Quebec. Those propositions are now before us, and they amount to nothing short of an entire revolution of our affairs—both social and political. We confess, we stand amazed at the hardihood of our leading politicians. We see before us an elaborately concocted scheme for our political and social regeneration, while we, as a people, have never even been consulted as to whether such a regeneration is in accordance with either our present taste, or our prospective prosperity. Twelve months ago, no one mentioned the Federation of the B. N. American provinces as an event even contemplated:—we now find the plan, not only suggested for our contemplation, but suddenly placed before us in a hurried, unsatisfactory manner, by two men whose chiefest political disputations hinged, but six months back, upon the appointment of a Provincial Judge in Equity. We are really unprepared for such sudden and violent changes. We cannot all at once declare ourselves in favor of a total disruption of our whole political system. We cannot revolutionize the Province in a day, upon the mere fiat of Dr. TEPFER and Mr. McCLELLY. We cheerfully admit the good intentions of these gentlemen, but we would fain claim a little breathing time before we fully endorse their sentiments upon a question about which the mass of the people know next to nothing. We cannot, because we are on the "go-ahead" side of the Atlantic, admit that Federation, as exemplified in the neighbouring States, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. We cannot accept fair speeches as a set off against the teaching of experience, nor can we, with the ghastly spectacle of civil war before our eyes, put implicit faith in the wisdom of a compact by which we can gain nothing save an Intercolonial Railway at the cost of our colonial individuality. Let us glance for a moment at the main features of the Federation scheme as applicable to ourselves. We shall be allowed to have our own way upon "the imposition of duties upon the export

of timber, logs, masts, spars, &c."—upon "the management of penitentiaries, and reformatory prisons, &c."—and generally upon "all matters of a private or local nature, not assigned to the general Government." These are to be our privileges forsooth! And what are we to gain by the proposed Federation?—the Intercolonial Railway! A great boon, it is true,—for the promise of which we are called upon to surrender our right to legislate for such trifling matters as—"The regulation of trade and commerce,—the imposition or regulation of excise duties,—the Postal service,—Sea coast and inland fisheries,—Banking—incorporation of banks, and the issue of paper money,—Savings banks,—Bills of exchange, and promissory notes,—Copyrights,—Marriage and Divorce,—Immigration,—Agriculture," &c. &c. All such matters are more or less weighty; but they have been settled for us, without even consulting us, on the pledge of an Intercolonial Railway!

Now, let us reflect for a moment upon the position of Halifax, in relation to the scheme of Federation, as also in its relation to the interests of the mother country. England is proud to possess Canada, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island; but it is not altogether impossible that were such Provinces to evince a wish to be independent of British control, England would urge no very decided objections. But it is not so with Halifax. England wishes to retain all her Colonies, but she can afford to part with some of them, should the colonists so wish it. But there are certain strongholds which she will retain—by force, if necessary, and Halifax is one of these. England wishes to retain the Canadas, but she will not listen to unreasonable terms;—she intends to keep Nova Scotia, and will keep it on her own terms. This is the difference between our position and that of our neighbours. And this difference does not seem to have been rightly estimated at the Quebec Convention. The "high falutin" style seems to have been the order of the day. When the central Government undertakes to furnish us with Lieutenant Governors,—we think that, like the mimic Queen in Hamlet, it "doth protest too much." It is not long since we showed the utter absurdity of this proposal. The people of the maritime provinces will never tolerate Lieutenant Governors selected from the inhabitants of rival provinces; nor is it possible that a Lieutenant Governor can be selected from among ourselves, for so long as there are two political parties in existence, any such Governor will be disapproved of by one half of our population. It may be urged that, once united by Federation, provincial rivalries will cease to exist; but this is a difficult theory to maintain, inasmuch as no expounder of scriptural prophecy, not even Dr. CUMMING, has yet hinted at the proposed Federation in connection with the Millennium. Dismissing, therefore, that portion of the Conference scheme which treats of Lieutenant Governors, as simply nonsensical, let us pass on to other matters. The central Government will undertake, among other trifles, to legislate for "Militia—military and naval service and defence," as also for, "Lines of steam or other ships, railways, canals, and other works, connecting any two or more of the Provinces together, or extending be-