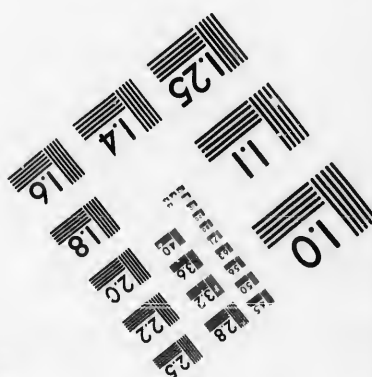
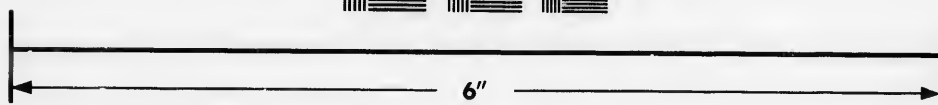
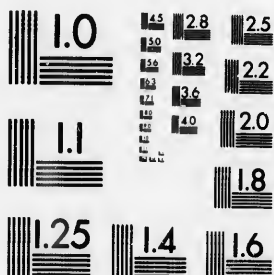


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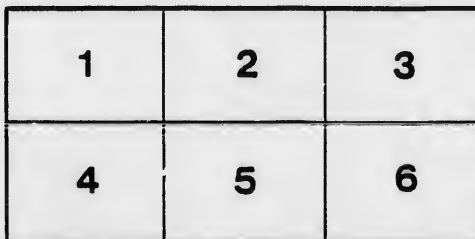
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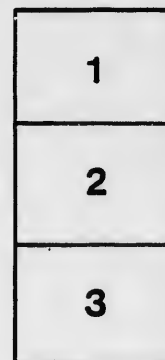
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SPEECH

OF THE

HON. GEO. BROWN, M.P.P.,

President of the Executive Council of Canada,

WHEN

RE-ELECTED BY ACCLAMATION FOR THE
SOUTH RIDING OF OXFORD,

ON

THE COALITION OF 1864,

FORMED SPECIALLY

TO SECURE PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

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—♦♦—

WOODSTOCK, 11th July, 1864.

Hon. GEORGE BROWN having been declared duly elected by acclamation member for the County, came forward, amid great cheering, and said :—

ELECTORS OF OXFORD!—I thank you most heartily for the kind manner in which you have acted to-day. But, indeed, it is only what I ventured to expect at your hands. This is the tenth occasion on which I have presented myself for the suffrages of an Upper Canadian constituency—but never at any time have I been able to come before the electors with such perfect confidence that I had a just claim to their support—that I was right, clearly right, in the course I was pursuing, and was seeking earnestly and with a single mind the welfare of my country. (Loud Cheers.) I confess to you that I do feel deeply gratified by what has taken place to-day. When I look over the immense crowd now stretched before me, I see the well-known faces of men of all parties and creeds—of those who have been bitterly opposed to me in past years, as well as of the long-tried friends who have stood unswervingly by me in every political vicissitude—(cheers)—and have I not just cause to feel gratified and happy that all are at last agreed—that the bold step recently taken has your unanimous sanction and approval—and that I may now return to my seat in Parliament with the assurance that I truly represent the sentiments of all classes of my constituents. (Cheers.) Once before I had the gratification of constructing a Government pledged to the settlement of the constitutional difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada, but on that occasion the movement proceeded from my own political party, and was resisted by our political opponents. Great difficulties stood in our way—and though I am persuaded those difficulties would have been overcome had we been allowed that constitutional appeal to the electors to which, I think, we were entitled—still it is not to be denied that on the present occasion the influences combined in favour of a just settlement of our troubles give much better security for success than we possessed in 1858. I stand here to-day as a member of an Administration pledged to deal promptly and firmly with the question—an Administration sustained nearly by the unanimous voice of the

Upper Canada Reform party in the Assembly, by nearly the whole of the Upper Canada Conservative party, and by a large majority of the representatives of Lower Canada. (Cheers.) The position I occupy to-day is, I think, a full and satisfactory answer to the charges of impracticability, of factiousness, of demagoguism, and so forth, that have so often and so freely been hurled against me. (Cheers.) I wish not to utter a word to-day calculated in the least degree to revive old feuds. (Hear, hear.) We have all agreed to act heartily together for the remedy of a great national wrong, from which all of us equally suffer, and the sooner we completely banish the past and fasten our thoughts upon the future the more prompt and complete will be the success of our joint efforts. But I am persuaded it will not be thought out of place if once and forever I state the grievances of which we Upper Canadians have complained, the persistent efforts we have made to obtain redress, and the various remedies suggested for adoption. Gentlemen, the primary cause of all our troubles is to be found in the provisions of the Imperial Union Act of 1840. Previous to the passing of that Act Upper Canada and Lower Canada were separate provinces, with separate Legislatures and separate Executive Governments. The Union Act brought them together under one Legislature and Government, but unfortunately it maintained the line of demarcation between the two sections, and secured to each forty-two representatives in the popular branch—afterwards increased to sixty-five. When this Act went into force, Lower Canada had 175,000 people more than Upper Canada, but from the large immigration into Upper Canada the Western Province soon outstripped the Eastern. In 1847 Upper Canada passed in advance of the Lower Province; in 1852 the census returns showed her to have 61,000 souls more than Lower Canada; in January, 1861, the census returns showed her to have, 284,525 souls more than Lower Canada; and now, by the official calculations of the Statistical Board, the excess of Upper Canada population exceeds 400,000 souls. Now, unfortunately, the Union Act provided no remedy for this state of things. Notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers, those living on the eastern side of the line drawn in 1792 have the same number of representatives as those living on the western side of it. True, the Canadian Parliament has full power to change the system of representation, but the Lower Canadians have clung tenaciously to their advantage, and the political power they have wielded has heretofore enabled them to resist all attempts at reform. The general injustice has become utterly unendurable in the case of the great western constituencies, that were almost uninhabited at the time of the Union, but have now been filled up by the tide of immigration. The counties of Huron and Bruce have a population of 79,453, and send only one member to Parliament—but there are ten members sitting for ten constituencies whose aggregate population is only 81,096! True, there are several towns among these ten constituencies—but leaving the towns out of the question, there are actually seven members sitting for seven Lower Canada counties whose aggregate population is but 76,650, while Mr. Dickson's constituents alone number 79,453! These seven counties are, Laval, Compton, Montmerenci, St. Maurice, Jacques Cartier, Soulanges, and Stanstead. Huron and Perth have a population of 117,586, but send only two representatives to Parliament; while there are ten Lower Canada counties, with an aggregate population of 117,964, that send no fewer than ten representatives! Huron, Perth and Grey have a population of 155,286 souls, and send but three representatives, while there are thirteen counties in Lower Canada with an aggregate population of 157,085, that send no fewer than thirteen representatives! These thirteen

counties are the seven named above, and Vaudreuil, L'Islet, Brome, Argenteuil, Bonaventure and Chambly. There are sixteen Upper Canada constituencies, with an aggregate population of 505,359 souls, that send only sixteen members to represent them; while there are twenty-eight Lower Canada constituencies, and fourteen Upper Canada constituencies, with an aggregate population of 501,287, that send no fewer than forty-two members to represent them! Thirty-nine members of Parliament represent constituencies having in the aggregate 1,248,579 souls; while all the other ninety-one members represent only 1,256,783! There are twenty members of the House who represent an aggregate constituency of 198,084, while there are other twenty members who represent 642,503! One half the House (sixty-five members) sit for 909,503 souls, while the other half sit for 1,585,448. Nothing could be more unjust, more utterly absurd, in a country almost entirely agricultural and having no class interests to be protected. I can well understand an objection being raised to population as the sole basis of representation. I can understand how territory may be contended for as an additional basis. I can understand how education may be contended for as a basis of representation—or wealth, or taxation, or even hereditary succession. However much I may dissent from such propositions, I can well understand how an argument upon them may be sustained; but I confess I never could comprehend with what sense or justice a united people, under one Legislature and Government, could in 1864 be divided for representative purposes by an imaginary division line drawn in 1792, without regard to population, wealth, taxation, or any other consideration than the existence of that magic line. But, gentlemen, unjust as this is—humiliating as it is for the people of Upper Canada to occupy so inferior a position in the body politic—the practical injury and injustice become intolerable when we look at the enormous proportion of the general taxation contributed by the people of Upper Canada. Many years ago it was admitted by the Lower Canadians themselves that Upper Canada contributed 67 per cent. to the general revenue, and Lower Canada only 33 per cent.; but this was under the fact, and no one conversant with our commercial statistics now ventures to deny that Upper Canada pays three-fourths of the whole Provincial taxation—if, indeed, she does not pay four-fifths. A better illustration cannot be given than that of the excise duties. These duties have been recently very largely increased. Last year they yielded \$771,164. Now, of this sum Lower Canada paid \$192,932, and Upper Canada not less than \$578,232—and no doubt a large portion of the articles on which these excise duties were paid in Lower Canada found their way into Upper Canada for consumption. Now, is it to be borne that a section of the people of Canada, less by four hundred thousand than the other section, and paying but one pound of taxation out of every four or five pounds going into the public chest, should send to Parliament one half of the whole number of representatives? And the curious part of the matter is, that while Upper Canada is made to contribute this disproportionate share of the revenue, the division of the expenditure is very far from being regulated on the same system. The lion's share of the expenditure invariably goes to Lower Canada; and if an extra sum at any time has to be voted to Upper Canada for any special purpose, a corresponding sum must be invariably appropriated to Lower Canada, to maintain the equilibrium! Three or four to one is the principle of taxation—equality is the principle of expenditure! And the industrial projects of the two sections are equally disproportionate. In the year 1859—the last of which we have official returns—the wheat raised in Upper Canada was 24,620,425 bushels, and in Lower Canada only

2,654,354 bushels; peas in Upper Canada 9,961,396 bushels, and in Lower Canada 2,645,777; oats in Upper Canada 21,220,874 bushels, and in Lower Canada 17,551,296 bushels; Indian corn in Upper Canada, 2,256,290 bushels, and in Lower Canada 334,861 bushels; turnips in Upper Canada, 18,203,959 bushels, and in Lower Canada, 892,434 bushels; carrots in Upper Canada, 1,905,598 bushels, and in Lower Canada 293,067 bushels; wool in Upper Canada, 3,659,766 lbs., and in Lower Canada 1,967,388 lbs.; butter in Upper Canada, 26,828,264 lbs., and in Lower Canada 15,096,949 lbs.; cheese in Upper Canada, 2,687,172 lbs., and in Lower Canada 686,297 lbs. The estimated value of the farms and farming implements in Upper Canada was in 1861, \$306,442,662, and in Lower Canada only \$178,870,271. But in the face of these undeniable facts, the people of Lower Canada send to Parliament one-half of the whole Representative body. Nothing could be more unjust—nothing more irritating to an intelligent and high spirited people. And not only do we contribute a most unjust share of the revenue and receive a most unjust share of the expenditures, but the system of taxation, the commercial policy, and in fact the whole conduct of public affairs has been to a very great extent, ever since the Union, controlled by Lower Canada. It is true that each Province has the same number of Representatives—65 each—but the French Canadians are bound closely together by a common language, a common religious faith and a common nationality; the Upper Canadians, on the contrary, are separated by all the diversities of social, religious, commercial and political opinions that everywhere prevail among the Anglo-Saxon family; and the consequence is that when a new ministry has to be formed or an old one reconstructed, the influence of the Lower Canada members has been ever the preponderating power. The measures of the day, too, have systematically felt the influence of their moulding hand, and those who pay the vast proportion of the taxes have had little influence in controlling the mode of taxation, or the economical expenditure of the revenues. It could not be otherwise than that extravagance and waste should have resulted from such a system. Where one section of country pays the taxes and the other spends them—where men have the power of voting for the expenditure of moneys in a way beneficial to themselves and the heavy burden of the cost is borne by others, it is not in human nature that strict economy in the expenditure should be practised. Give the tax-payers of Canada full control over the taxation, and, my word for it, there will be very different economy practised in the future from what we have witnessed in the past. Another serious grievance resulting from the working of the Union has been the direct control exercised by the Lower Canadians in the local affairs of Upper Canada. The Lower Canadian representatives have been so united, that the dominant party of that section have been able to obtain a majority in Parliament and retain the reins of power by allying themselves with a small section of the Upper Canada representatives. And thus, after an excited general election, at which public opinion in Upper Canada has been unmistakably manifested as to men and measures, by the triumphant return to Parliament of a large majority of one party—by Lower Canadian influence, the expressed wishes of the electors have been set at naught, the reforms approved of at the polls have been rejected, and the administration of local business and local patronage in Upper Canada has been placed in the hands of those whom the electors of Upper Canada had condemned, but whom the political leaders of Lower Canada chose to honor. But, gentlemen, perhaps the worst of all the evil's entailed by the system of Government has been the demoralizing influ-

ence exercised on the public men of the Province. In other countries the road to influence and power in the State is by a career of consistent adherence to principle; but here the road to what is called success in public life for an Upper Canadian has been by abnegating, when he got to the seat of Government, all the professions that won him the confidence of his constituents. Lower Canadian views and feelings have been very different from those of Upper Canada—but Lower Canada has held the gate of office, and he who would enter the official portal had to forget his old Western opinions and bow low to the enunciations of the East. Need I remind you how many Upper Canadians have entered public life high in hope and giving promise of a bright career, but who speedily lost the confidence of their constituents by thus ignoring the principles on which they were elected? And need I remind you, also, of the effect of such scenes on the public mind—the loss of faith in public men—the general belief that the contests of public life were but a fight for office? Much, very much, has there been to condemn in the public events of the last ten years—much has there been in the conduct of public men to deplore—but it would be useless to deny that a large portion of the wrong and error that have been committed, directly resulted from the demoralizing influence to which public men have been exposed. But two instances have we in modern history of countries enjoying free institutions with the same difficulties to contend against. Holland and Belgium were bound together in 1815 under circumstances almost identical with those of Canada—but the union was found totally unworkable, and in the short space of fifteen years the discontent issued in open revolt, and the connection was rent asunder. In the United States of America, the Union between freedom in the North and slavery in the South produced the same sectional evils, but in a more aggravated form than those we have had to deplore. The slave power was the prominent influence in the State—he who would rise in public life had to bow before its mandates—the utter demoralization of Northern politicians was the result—and it is not to be denied that had the general Government of the Republic been, like ours, legislative and not federal, an open rupture of the alliance would have come long before it did in the desolating civil war now raging beyond our lines. Was it in human nature that the people of Upper Canada should have patiently submitted to such injustice? Is it at all surprising that acrimony and discord should have been the result of so deplorable a state of affairs? Was it not clearly our duty to combine at all hazards, and by every means within our reach, for the speedy and complete reform of a system so hurtful and unjust? (Cheers.) For one, I am free to say that I look back on the agitation of the last twelve years, with all its attendant strife and discord, without a shadow of regret. I have all along regarded it—and I see it more clearly to-day than I ever did before—that all that agitation and discord was the painful, but the absolutely necessary, ordeal through which we had to pass to the accomplishment of our great purpose. (Cheers.) For many years before I entered Parliament, I had been behind the scenes, and perceived all the evils of our political system as plainly as we do to-day; and when I first became a candidate for a seat in Parliament in 1851, it was with the avowed intention of laboring, in season and out of season, for a reform of the constitutional relations between Upper and Lower Canada. My friend, Mr. Mackenzie, of Lambton, whom I am glad to see on the hustings to-day—(cheers)—was with me in that first contest; his brother, Mr. Hope Mackenzie, my colleague in the North Riding, and my friend Mr. McKellar, of Kent, were also active participants in that contest, and they could tell you how

completely we then understood the long struggle that was before us, and how clearly we foresaw the ordeal we had to pass. But they could also tell you how well we knew that that ordeal was needful to be passed, and that through agitation and discord victory would certainly be won. (Cheers.) The agitation was speedily carried into the Legislature. We took up the broad ground that on the just settlement of the Representation question rested the future peace and prosperity of Canada—that good government was not to be hoped for until that was accomplished—and from that day to this we have sought to make every question subservient to that—to make every passing event and every political movement conducive to its accomplishment. (Cheers.) A very small band was there of us when we commenced, but our numbers quickly increased. It was not an easy battle we had to fight—it was never at any time an agreeable one—but the end we sought was nothing less than a political revolution—and if success is won—as won I am satisfied it will shortly be—we who have borne the brunt of the battle may well afford to bear calmly and without retort, taunts as to the weapons with which the fight was won. (Cheers.) From the first day the agitation commenced in Parliament our course was onward. From session to session we increased in strength, and each new general election brought us fresh recruits from the people. At last, in 1858, the Government of the day having resigned, the Governor-General entrusted to my hands the formation of a new Administration, and I succeeded in constructing a Government pledged to apply a permanent remedy to the sectional difficulties of the Province. The proposed basis of settlement was Representation by Population, with checks and guarantees for the local interests of Lower Canada. Unfortunately the existing Parliament did not sustain us, and the Governor-General refused us an appeal to the electors.—

MR. JAMES LAW—The double-shuffle !

MR. BROWN—Never mind that. We have forgotten all about double-shuffles now ! (Laughter and cheers.) The formation of the Brown-Dorion Administration had, however, this good effect, that it coerced their opponents into action in the same direction. In October, 1858, several prominent members of the Cartier-Macdonald Government were in England, and they addressed a formal despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, calling attention to the grave evils that had arisen under the existing Constitution. The document was signed by Mr. Cartier, Mr. Galt, and Mr. John Ross. It stated that “very grave difficulties now presented themselves in conducting the Government of “Canada”—that “the progress of population had been more rapid in the “western section, and claims are now made on behalf of its inhabitants “for giving them representation in the Legislature in proportion to their “numbers”—that “the result is shown by an agitation fraught with “great danger to the peaceful and harmonious working of our constitutional system, and consequently detrimental to the progress of the province”—that this “state of things is yearly becoming worse”—and that the Canadian Government were impressed with the necessity of “seeking “for such a mode of dealing with those difficulties as may forever remove “them.” Gentlemen, this was a bold and manly step on the part of the Cartier-Macdonald Government—and I have always given them full credit for it. They admitted our whole case in this document—the existence of a great evil and the necessity of finding a remedy for it. The scheme, I believe, they had in contemplation was a federal union of the whole British American Provinces ; but unfortunately they did not proceed with it. We did not let the subject fall, however. In 1859, a Reform Convention was called together at Toronto, to consider the constitutional

relations between Upper and Lower Canada. The Convention was attended by 570 delegates—men of position and influence, from all parts of Upper Canada—the whole subject was fully and freely discussed—and the following resolutions were adopted, with hardly a dissenting voice:—

"1. *Resolved*—That the existing Legislative Union of Upper and Lower Canada has failed to realize the anticipations of its promoters, has resulted in a heavy public debt, burdensome taxation, great political abuses, and universal dissatisfaction throughout Upper Canada; and it is the matured conviction of this assembly, from the antagonisms developed through difference of origin, local interests, and other causes, that the Union, in its present form, can no longer be continued with advantage to the people."

"5. *Resolved*—That in the opinion of this assembly, the best practicable remedy for the evils now encountered in the government of Canada is to be found in the formation of two or more local governments, to which shall be committed the control of all matters of a local or sectional character, and some joint authority charged with such matters as are necessarily common to both sections of the Province."

"6. *Resolved*—That while the details of the changes proposed in the last resolution are necessarily subject for future arrangement, yet this assembly deems it imperative to declare that no government would be satisfactory to the people of Upper Canada which is not based on the principle of Representation by Population."

In the same year (1859) a meeting of the Lower Canada Liberal members of Parliament was held at Montreal, to "consider the political position of the country, and the duties thereby imposed on the Liberal party of Lower Canada." At that meeting, a committee, consisting of Messrs. A. A. Dorion, T. D. McGee, L. T. Drummond, L. A. Dessaulles, was appointed to report upon the subject which brought the meeting together. At a subsequent meeting, that committee presented a report, recommending that a remedy for the sectional difficulties of the country should be found in the federative principle. Here are some of the extracts from it:—

"Your Committee are impressed with the conviction that whether we consider the present needs or the probable future condition of the country, the true, the statesman-like solution is to be sought in the substitution of a purely *Federative* for the present so-called *Legislative Union*; the former, it is believed, would enable us to escape all the evils, and to retain all the advantages, appertaining to the existing Union."

"The proposition to federalize the Canadian Union is not new. On the contrary, it has been frequently mooted in Parliament and in the press, during the last few years. It was no doubt suggested by the example of the neighbouring States, where the admirable adaptation of the federal system to the government of an extensive territory, inhabited by people of diverse origins, creeds, laws and customs, has been amply demonstrated; but shape and consistency were first imparted to it in 1856, when it was formally submitted to Parliament by the Lower Canada Opposition, as offering, in their judgment, the true corrective of the abuses generated under the present system."

"By this division of power, the General Government would be relieved from those questions of a purely local and sectional character, which, under our present system, have led to much strife and ill-will."

"The Committee believe that it is clearly demonstrable that the direct cost of maintaining both the federal and local governments need not exceed that

"of our present system, while its enormous indirect cost would, in consequence of the additional checks on expenditure involved in the new system, and the more direct responsibility of public servants in the province, to the people immediately affected by such expenditure, be entirely obviated."

* * * * *

"The proposed system could in no way diminish the importance of the colony, or impair the credit, while it presents the advantage of being susceptible, without any disturbance of the federal economy, of such territorial extension as circumstances may hereafter render desirable."

In the session of 1861, I was prevented by illness from attending Parliament, and during the session of 1862 I was not a member. Early in the latter session, the Cartier-Macdonald Government was defeated, and Mr. Sandfield Macdonald was sent for by His Excellency to form a new Administration. Mr. Macdonald sought the assistance of Mr. Sicotte. Mr. Sicotte insisted that Mr. Macdonald should set peremptorily aside the whole question of Representative reform, and that the Government should stand pledged to vote it down whenever it should be presented. Mr. Sandfield Macdonald consented to this condition, and the Macdonald-Sicotte Administration was formed on that basis. I have always thought that that was a most unfortunate concession, and that no Upper Canadian should have been a party to them;—and when, a few months after, I accepted your invitation to present myself as a candidate for your suffrages, I so declared. Very shortly after I took my seat as your representative, the Macdonald-Sicotte Ministry was defeated and broken up, and the Macdonald-Dorion Administration took its place. Under this Government, Parliamentary reform again became an open question, and its Upper Canada Members and supporters were left at full liberty to agitate the question. I eagerly availed myself of the opportunity, and shortly after the commencement of the session of 1864 I moved for a Select Committee of twenty members to consider the whole question of our constitutional relations, and to suggest a remedy for existing evils. I placed on the committee the most prominent men of the House—men of all shades of opinion on this question. Some of them laughed at the proposition, and declared they would not act on such a committee, that the thing was absurd, and that it was impossible we could come to an agreement. But my reply was—"never mind the difficulties—let us try—at any rate, let us come together, and argue the matter out. The Cartier-Macdonald Administration declared there was a necessity for dealing with our constitutional difficulties—the Brown-Dorion Administration declared the same, and agreed to deal with them—the Reform Convention of Toronto, and the Liberal Convention of Lower Canada both declared that the thing must be met—and surely the difficulty is not so great, but we may succeed in arriving at some satisfactory understanding, if we go heartily at it." The committee was carried by a majority of eleven, and the most prominent members of the House were upon it, whether they liked it or not. I was chairman. At the first meeting, on the excellent suggestion of Mr. John A. Macdonald, we turned out the public, clerk, reporters and all, that we might the more freely consider and discuss the whole question in all its bearings. The result was, that, after a number of meetings, we actually did agree on a report, which was signed by 12 out of the 20 members of the committee; only three voted against the report; five were absent, but two or three of them, had they been present, would have signed the report. A great step had been gained by the appointment of the committee, but a still greater by the adoption of the report. The question was not, what we Upper Canadians would desire—there was no doubt or difficulty as to that—but what would be

satisfactory to Upper Canada, and acceptable to the Lower Canadians. They ask, what do you want? Our reply is—Representation by Population—the sweeping away of the absurd line of demarcation between Upper and Lower Canada, and placing all Canadians on the same level. They answer—"We cannot grant you that." "No! why not?" "Because, if we grant you that, you will come down with your majority, and destroy our language, our religion, our laws, everything which we peculiarly cherish." "No," we say, "we have no desire that you should not be at full liberty to manage your local affairs as you like. All we want is to have a like control over our own local affairs, and also that just influence in matters of common concern to both to which our numbers entitle us." Well, a report was drawn up in accordance with this, in favour of the federal principle. (Hear, hear.) The details, of course, were not settled, but it was a very great gain to get Mr. Cartier, Mr. Turcotte, Mr. Chapais, and other leading French Canadians, to sign a report in favour of applying the Federal principle to Canada, involving as it did, that, in the popular branch of the Federal Legislature, the representation should be based on population. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, on the very same day that that report was presented to the House, the Taché-Macdonald Government was defeated by a majority of two. The question they had then to consider was what course they should adopt—whether they should resign, re-construct, or go to the country. Their predecessors but a few weeks before had tried to form a Coalition, but had not succeeded. They themselves had made the same attempt, and failed. And as for appealing to the country, a general election had taken place only last fall, and there was little hope that another appeal would make much difference in the position of affairs. Under all the circumstances, however, they deemed it best to advise a dissolution, and they so advised His Excellency. I am bound to say that the Governor-General, as he has always done from the first day he entered the province, acted in the emergency with a wisdom and an earnest desire to promote the welfare of Canada, for which he is entitled to our warmest gratitude. (Cheers.) So far as I understand the position taken by His Excellency, it was this:—"If you insist on a dissolution, I will grant it to you—but remember how serious a responsibility you take upon you. You will have had three elections in three years; you had four Administrations condemned in that time; and it is for you seriously to consider what grounds there are for supposing that another election will change the situation." I am satisfied there was not a man on either side of the House who believed that a general election would have materially altered the state of matters. But suppose that either party had obtained a gain of four or five seats, and more was impossible; still there would have been a large Upper Canada majority arrayed in hostile feud against a large Lower Canada majority, and we would have had, with aggravations, a repetition of all the old difficulties. Clearly a very grave dilemma had arisen. Instantly, I determined to make use of that dilemma. I went at once to several supporters of the Government and strongly urged upon them that the existing crisis should be improved for the settlement of our whole sectional troubles; and I assured them that I, for one, was prepared to co-operate with the present, or any other Administration that would deal with this question, promptly and firmly, with a view to its final settlement. The gentlemen to whom I spoke, communicated to the members of the Government the purport of what I had stated, and the Government resolved to approach me on the subject. Accordingly, a meeting was arranged, and Messrs. Macdonald and Galt called on me at my quarters. I stated at the start that, in

my opinion, nothing but the hope of settling forever the sectional troubles of the Province, could justify men so opposed as we had been for years, meeting together with a view to united political action—and in this Messrs. Macdonald and Galt entirely acquiesced. I then asked in what position they came to me, whether as deputed by the administration or simply as leading members of the Ministerial party. They replied they were charged by their colleagues formally to invite my aid in strengthening the Administration with a view to the settlement of the sectional difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada. My answer at once was that, on grounds purely personal, it was quite impossible that I could be a member of any Administration at present; but that even had this been otherwise, I would have conceived it highly objectionable that parties who had been so long and so strongly opposed to each other, should enter the same Cabinet. I thought the public mind would be shocked by such an arrangement; but I felt very strongly that the present crisis presented an opportunity of dealing with this question that might never occur again, and if the Administration were prepared to pledge themselves clearly and publicly to bring in a measure next session that would be acceptable to Upper Canada, the basis to be now settled and announced in Parliament, I would heartily co-operate with them and try to induce my friends to sustain them until they had an opportunity of maturing their measure. Mr. Macdonald and Mr. Galt then contended, that with a view to giving confidence to the Opposition and the country in the arrangement—it was essential I should enter the Government; I denied this, and contended that other members of the Opposition could give that guarantee equally with myself, and might be disposed to enter the Government. It was finally agreed that we should waive all personal matters for the present, and ascertain first whether a satisfactory basis could be agreed upon. After many interviews with Sir Etienne Tache, Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Cartier, and Mr. Galt, we finally agreed upon the following basis, as one which we believed would be satisfactory to Upper Canada and acceptable to Lower Canada:

“The Government are prepared to pledge themselves to bring in a measure, next session, for the purpose of removing existing difficulties by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-west territory to be incorporated into the same system of Government.

“And the Government will seek, by sending representatives to the Lower Provinces, and to England, to secure the assent of those interests which are beyond the control of our own legislation to such a measure as may enable all British North America to be united under a general Legislature based upon the Federal principle.”

I was now in a position to submit a definite proposition to my political friends, and without delay I called a meeting of the Upper Canada Reformers in the House of Assembly. There are 41 of us in all, of whom 39 were present. There were but two absentees, and both, I believe, go heartily with the new arrangement. Doubtless you have all seen the resolutions adopted at that meeting. The result was, that the basis which had been agreed upon was all but unanimously accepted. The Conservative members of Parliament also held a meeting. Mr. John A. Macdonald, I understand, explained to them the conclusion we had arrived at, and they endorsed the scheme almost as unanimously as the Liberal party had done. Then came the question how the compact was to be carried out. The Government had proposed that three members of the Opposition should accept seats in the Cabinet; with a number of our friends Mr. Mowat and I strongly objected to that, and con-

tended that it would be much better to support the Government outside until their measure was matured. We were, however, defeated in this. The meeting decided by a vote of 26 to 11 that the offer of the Government should be accepted, and that one of the three seats in the Cabinet should be filled by me. I was still most unwilling to consent, but the Government were as urgent as my own friends, and finally, not daring to assume the responsibility of refusal, I agreed to accept office. But I wish every one fully to understand that nothing but the unspeakable importance of the settlement sought to be accomplished by the arrangement would have induced me to consent. Had the proposition been to enter the Government for the mere purpose of carrying on the ordinary administration of public affairs—nothing could have tempted me to listen to it for one moment. (Cheers.) As it was, I had extreme repugnance to overcome. I was willing to do anything but take office. I offered to be sworn in as an Executive Councillor without department and without salary—or to go to the Lower Provinces as a Commissioner, or in any other way to be made responsible for the movement, provided only that I was excused from entering the same Government with those to whom I had been so long and so strongly opposed. I have always regarded Ministerial Coalitions as vicious in principle, and calculated to bring the public men who are parties to them into popular contempt. When gentlemen who have been arrayed against each other for many years, on all the great questions of the day, are seen suddenly entering the same Cabinet, acting together and defending each other in all their acts, how can it fail to give a shock to the public mind, and cause people to doubt whether they ever were sincere in the course they so persistently pursued? For myself, with reference to the gentlemen with whom I am now associated, I say I have never spoken a word nor written a line which in my conscience I did not believe to be deserved. And, although we may admit that when actuated by strong political feelings, all men are apt to see things in a different light from that in which they appeared to those who were the actors in them, and that stronger language than is necessary is constantly used in the heat of argument—still I was the last man to take any step that might by possibility expose me to the imputation of insincerity in my past public career. (Cheers.) But who can fail to see that it was only by men of opposite parties that the great reform we sought to effect could possibly be accomplished? (Hear, hear.) This was no ordinary question of party politics. We had all the sectional and national prejudices of the Lower Canadians to deal with, and an opportunity was presented for approaching the question efficiently that might not occur again for twenty years to come. Under these circumstances, I felt that I would be taking a serious responsibility on myself, if I did that which might jeopardise the success of the great movement. Events had so shaped themselves, that we had with us, the Reformers of Upper Canada, the Conservatives of Upper Canada, and the majority of Lower Canada—and even as regards our Rouge friends of Lower Canada, we know they are fully committed, by their pledges of past years, to the policy of the Government, and so well do I know the honour of Mr. Dorion, Mr. Holton and their friends, that, when our Bill comes up for final approval, I have not a doubt that the names of nearly all of them will be recorded among the yeas. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, it may be that this movement shall yet eventuate in failure. We all know that there is many a slip between the cup and the lip; but I am thoroughly persuaded that the parties to this compact are sincere and earnest in the work they have undertaken, and if the carpers and fault-finders will but keep themselves in patience for the next few

months, I have not a doubt that we will find a solution for our troubles, that will prove itself acceptable to both sections of the Province. (Cheers.) Woe to that Upper Canadian who from petty personal motives takes upon him the responsibility of prejudicing a movement that twenty years might not again present an opportunity of successfully completing. (Cheers.) I hear it constantly demanded—*What about the details? What about the local Governments? What about elective Governors? What about the prodigious cost?* (Laughter.) Now, every one must see how impossible it is to answer such questions. The details have not yet been settled—hardly even been discussed—and it would be the very height of folly were any of us to say now what shape these details may or may not finally assume. (Hear, hear.) Not a word that I utter to-day but is liable to be twisted and distorted—transferred to the French papers of Lower Canada with new exaggerations—and diligently used there to raise up obstacles in the path of Mr. Cartier and his friends. (Hear, hear.) This is not a movement which we can permit to be frittered away by personal jealousies or party antagonisms, and the man who, at this stage, is perpetually carping about the details, is doing all in his power to prejudice the interests of Upper Canada. (Hear, hear.) We ask but the few months necessary to prepare our measure, and when Parliament meets we shall have it ready for discussion. It ought not to be forgotten that the question is not what we in Upper Canada want. We all know exactly what we want. But the question really is, what can we get from Lower Canada? We know that the general basis which has been agreed to is, that all local affairs shall be committed to local bodies, and that matters common to all shall be committed to a Legislature, constituted on the basis of Representation by Population in the lower branch, and equality in the upper—

MR. JAMES LAW—What better off will we be as regards our money matters when there is equality in the Upper House?

MR. BROWN—That question of my friend Mr. Law is a specimen of what I have been referring to. I am placed at great disadvantage in answering such a question. I might reply that the Lower House has control over the public moneys—that though the Upper House can throw out the whole of a Supply Bill, it cannot alter, or reject, or add to any of its separate items. I might also reply that even were this otherwise—were both Houses equal in power—at least we would obtain what we have never yet had—the full power of rejecting objectionable measures. But this would be very far from such an answer as I might give were I able to say what shall be held as local matters and what general, and how many sections will have representation in the Upper House. These are questions of detail, but of such vital importance as seriously to affect the merit of the scheme, and as they have not yet been settled I cannot enter on their discussion. (Cheers.)

AN ELECTOR—Are wealth and extent of territory to have no effect on representation in the Lower House? I ask this because I have been told that they will.

MR. BROWN—So far as wealth exists in large and populous constituencies, it will, of course, be represented, and so far as the qualification of the members of Parliament is concerned it will also be represented. But you have heard the basis which has been agreed upon, and can judge what the effect will be as well as I can. (Hear, hear.) I can only say that, in my opinion, the scheme which it is intended to carry out will cut off a large share of the waste and extravagance we have been complaining of, and will give us a cheaper system of government than what we have now. Certainly we could not well have a more costly system than that we have

at present. (Hear, hear.) But I am told that I should not have gone into the Government with a less representation than one-half the Cabinet—that it was quite improper that three of the Liberal party should have gone in with nine of the other side. Now, when the question was put to me by the Government—“how many seats do you demand for your ‘party?’” I replied, six—one-half of the Cabinet. I was then asked how I proposed to distribute them, and I replied, four from Upper Canada and two from Lower Canada. I was asked how many supporters I could bring from Lower Canada—and having ascertained that Mr. Dorion and his friends would not as a body be parties to the compact, I was compelled to reply that I could bring very little strength to the Government in Lower Canada. The argument then assumed a totally different shape. Sir E. Tache and Mr. Cartier had boldly and manfully committed themselves to the movement—it was our interest to strengthen them in every possible way—it was contended that the Lower Canada section of the Government, *quoad* the question that we had coalesced upon, was as satisfactory as it could possibly be made—and that any change in its *personnel* could only lessen the ability of the Government to deal effectively with the question. I had to admit the force of this reasoning. Then came the distribution of the Upper Canada seats. On behalf of the Liberal party I claimed four seats—being our fair proportion according to our numbers, but I was met at once with the reply that with anything less than equality the Conservative party could not be induced to sanction the arrangement. I was quite satisfied that this was the fact—and as the whole object of the Coalition was to unite both parties in promoting the measure—and as I believed that the three gentlemen representing the Conservatives are equally with us interested in the question and equally desirous of settling it, I did not hesitate cheerfully to yield the point. I did not conceal from myself, moreover, that every executive act must be unanimous—and that as we had entered the Cabinet specially for the promotion of one great work, whether we had three votes or four in the discussion would not have affected the final issue. (Hear, hear.) But it is said—You should not have gone in under Mr. Macdonald—having a much larger following of the Upper Canada members, you ought to have had the leadership. Now, let me confess I have not at any time much care about high places in the synagogue. My constant desire is to accomplish the thing I am aiming at, and if I but get it I care little whether it be in a high position or an humble one, in office or out of it. (Cheers.) But the objection is without foundation. There is but one chief in the Government. Sir E. P. Tache is Prime Minister, and all the others take precedence according to the time when they first became Ministers of the Crown. (Cheers.) But I am told that I have deserted my Lower Canada friends. Now, in this there is not a particle of truth. When I moved for my committee of inquiry they refused to vote for it. When I urged them to come into the committee and discuss the question, they refused to do it. When the report was adopted Mr. Cartier and his friends voted for it, but of the Liberal party only Mr. Holton did so. Before the negotiations were opened with me I warned Mr. Dorion and Mr. Holton of what was coming, and urged them to take action on the question, but they refused to do so. When the negotiations were fairly begun I told them frankly what had passed, and strongly urged them to join the movement, but they steadily declined. I felt all the pain of acting apart from my old friends, but they left me no resource. I ask you, my constituents, if I would have been true to you and true to Upper Canada, if I had sacrificed the interests of my own section of the country, and all my labour during the last fifteen years, simply because

these gentlemen refused to go along with me? (Hear, hear.) Had I done so—had I refused to aid the Government and the negotiations had been broken off—a general election must have followed, and truly I would have found myself in a most untenable position. Mr. John A. Macdonald and his friends would have gone to the country saying: “Here is a party who have been declaring that they wanted Representation by Population above all other measures—we were prepared to give it to them, and they flatly refused to aid us. Here are men who profess to have so much at heart the interests of Upper Canada—we gave them an opportunity of getting justice to Upper Canada, such as may not recur for twenty years to come, and they refused to touch it.” Had I taken such a course, I would have deserved to be banished from public life forever. But, I am told, “Oh! Mr. Brown is splitting up the Reform party.” And very funny it is to observe from what quarter this objection comes. Does it come from those who have always been Reformers? Not a bit of it—but mainly from men who have come into the ranks within the last few years. (Hear, hear.) I am free to say that I look upon party alliances as formed for the good of the whole people, and the moment they stand in the way of the well-being of the country, they become an injury and not a blessing. And did my party or fifty parties stand in the way of obtaining this great measure of redress for Upper Canada, I should rend all party ties asunder without a moment’s hesitation. (Cheers.) I have faith enough in the Reform electors of Upper Canada to believe they will thoroughly comprehend that in going into this Coalition, it has been done with a sincere desire to advance the peace and prosperity of our country, and that they will think with me to place this great work of reform in the balance with a momentary party advantage, would be but paltry statesmanship. (Cheers.) But I am told that the whole negotiation is a piece of deception; that Mr. John A. Macdonald and Mr. Cartier are merely pulling the wool over Mr. Brown’s eyes—(laughter)—without the slightest intention of carrying out what they solemnly agreed to. Now, so far from there being any truth in this imputation, I am bound to say that all the parties to the negotiations, from first to last, have acted in the most candid, sincere and honourable manner. (Hear, hear.) And those sceptical gentlemen, who are so much afraid of being deceived, will please carry this away with them—that, if the combination had broken down the very day it commenced, or were it to break down to-day, or a week, or a month, or three months hence, more good would have been already accomplished by it than would be a sufficient compensation for all the loss and evil which could possibly result, were the fears of these sceptical gentlemen realized. (Hear, hear.) By this movement the leading public men in the country have been committed to do justice, immediate justice, to Upper Canada—all the great political parties have committed themselves to the admission that a great evil exists, and that a remedy must speedily be provided,—and more than that, we have now an acknowledged remedy formally placed on record, agreed to by a Conservative Cabinet, endorsed by both political parties, and sanctioned by Her Majesty’s representative. (Cheers.) The final accomplishment of this great reform may be deferred—but it must go forward—it cannot now go back. (Cheers.) But I am told that our scheme is un-British. I have here some extracts to show you that, if the scheme be un-British, it has at all events been assented to by some of the foremost of British statesmen. The first person of eminence who declared in favour of a Federal system as regards the two Canadas, was no less a statesman than William Pitt. When the Constitutional Act was before the Imperial Parliament in 1791, Mr. Pitt used the following language:—

"If the Province were not divided there would be only one House of Assembly; and there being two parties, if those parties should be equal or nearly equal in the Assembly, it would be the source of perpetual faction. If one of the parties should be much stronger than the other, the other might justly complain that they were oppressed." In another part of the same speech, he said,—*"He believed there was such a rooted opposition of interests, that if there was a constitution consisting of a House of Assembly in which the parties might be nearly balanced, the consequence, at least for a long series of years, would be, a great degree of animosity and confusion."*

He accordingly opposed the scheme for union, and the Provinces were separated under his Act. And what did Edmund Burke say? He used this language :—

"An attempt to join people dissimilar in law, language, and manners, appeared to him highly absurd. To join, too, the conquerors and the conquered must give rise to much unpleasant feeling and many invidious distinctions. He recommended that system of government which tended to promote the good of the individual and the public, in opposition to that which attempted to methodize anarchy."

That is just what we have been attempting to do—to methodize anarchy. (Hear, hear.) Such were the speeches delivered when the original Constitutional Act was passed. And it is a singular thing, too, that those who cry out that this is un-British forget that the scheme which received the sanction of the Imperial Government in 1837 is the very thing we are now proposing. Here is the resolution adopted in that year by both Houses of the Imperial Parliament :—

"That great inconvenience has been sustained by His Majesty's subjects inhabiting the Provinces of Lower Canada and Upper Canada, from the want of some adequate means for regulating and adjusting questions respecting the trade and commerce of the said Provinces, and divers other questions wherein the said Provinces have a common interest; and it is expedient that the Legislatures of the said Provinces respectively be authorized to make provision for the joint regulation and adjustment of such their common interests."

And when Lord Durham was sent out to Canada to enquire into the evils which existed, and to find a remedy for them, a letter of instruction was given to him by the Imperial Government, part of which reads as follows :—

"It is clear that some plan must be devised to meet the just demands of Upper Canada. It will be for your Lordship, in conjunction with the Committee, to consider if this should not be done by constituting some joint legislative authority, which should preside over all questions of common interest to the two Provinces, and which might be appealed to in extraordinary cases to arbitrate between contending parties in either, preserving, however, to each Province its distinct Legislature, with authority in all matters of an exclusively domestic concern. If this should be your opinion, you will have further time to consider what should be the nature and limits of such authority, and all the particulars which ought to be comprehended in any scheme for its establishment."

Such were the views of the Imperial Government of that day, and it is much to be regretted that they did not adhere to their original purpose. But certain merchants of Montreal were afraid lest their interests should suffer, if left in the hands of the French Canadians, and they had influence enough to get the intentions of the Imperial Government changed. Now, observe what was Lord Durham's report :—

"The Bill should contain provisions by which any or all of the other North American colonies may, on the application of the Legislature, be, with the consent of the two Canadas, or their united Legislature, admitted into the Union on such terms as may be agreed on between them."

The very thing we are proposing to do now :—

“As the mere amalgamation of the Houses of Assembly of the two Provinces would not be advisable, or give at all a due representation to each, a Parliamentary commission should be appointed, for the purpose of forming the electoral divisions and determining the number of members to be returned on the principle of giving *representation, as near as may be, in proportion to population.*”

Which is just what we now propose.

“I am averse to every plan that has been proposed for giving an equal number of members to the two Provinces in order to attain the temporary end of outnumbering the French, because I think the same object will be obtained without any violation of the principles of representation, and without any such appearance of injustice in the scheme as would set public opinion, both in England and America, strongly against it; and because when immigration shall have increased the English population in the Upper Province, the adoption of such a principle would operate to defeat the very purpose it is intended to serve. It appears to me that any such electoral arrangement, founded on the present provincial divisions, would tend to defeat the purposes of union and perpetuate the idea of disunion. The same Commission should form a plan of local government by elective bodies, subordinate to the general legislature, and exercising a complete control over such local affairs as do not come within the province of general legislation. The plan so framed should be made an Act of the Imperial Parliament, so as to prevent the general legislature from encroaching on the powers of the local bodies. A general executive on an improved principle should be established, together with a Supreme Court of Appeal for all the North American Colonies.”

This, then, was Lord Durham's plan, and, had that been carried out, we would not have been in the position which we have held for the last ten years. Lord John Russell introduced a Bill, founded on Lord Durham's report, and observe what he says :—

“The Bill provides for the establishment of a central district at Montreal and its neighbourhood, at which the government shall be carried on, and where the Assembly shall meet. The other parts of Upper and of Lower Canada are each to be divided into two districts. It is proposed that these districts should be formed for the purpose of becoming municipal districts, for the imposition of taxes and rates, for all local purposes. With regard to the franchise, the right of election is to be the same for the municipal and the general election.”

That was the Bill of Lord John Russell in 1839, and it is only to be regretted that this Bill was withdrawn, and the Bill of 1840 substituted in its place. (Hear, hear.) It is the same scheme that then commended itself to the minds of British statesmen which we have now under consideration. The question of detail is a very wide one, which, of course, it is impossible to settle without the very fullest deliberation. But here you have the basis, and for any man to say it is un-British or unstatesmanlike, is to set aside the recorded opinions of the greatest of British statesmen. (Cheers.) But it is said that by this scheme we leave the British of Lower Canada out in the cold. Now, I can only say that, if ever a body of men deserved to be left out in the cold, it is the British of Lower Canada. But, so far as I am concerned, I am not in the least desirous to deal out to them the deserts they have so well earned. Little assistance in our struggles did we ever get from them. But I apprehend that when our measure comes to be matured, they will find that we have not been forgetful of the interests even of the Lower Canadians of British origin. (Hear, hear.) But I am told that the only thing that will be acceptable is the Federation of all the Provinces; that federating the Canadas alone, without gathering in the whole of the Pro-

vinces, is a peddling affair which ought to be treated with contempt. Now, I like great schemes as much as any one, but I want to see, before I leap, where I am leaping to. (Hear, hear.) Few of us know much of the Lower Provinces, and it is full time that we knew more—but if it is found that we can make a union with them on the ground of common interest, and on terms which will be just to us and fair to them, I for one am prepared to go heartily for it. And in any case it is the purpose of the Government to put into the coming measure such clauses as will entitle the Maritime Provinces and the North-west to come into the Canadian Union on suitable terms. But that man takes a strange view of our position who says—because we cannot bring in the other Provinces into the Union, we shall not have any remedy for the evils that Canada labors under. I am free to admit that the future of the British portion of this continent is a theme fitted to arouse the most lively enthusiasm of every true Canadian. Men talk of America and the American people as if our friends of the United States monopolised the whole continent. But the truth is that the British territories cover a larger portion of North America than the whole United States—(cheers)—and though a portion of it may never be filled up, although we may not for some time stretch our outposts to the extreme north of our domains—still boundless tracts of fertile lands have yet to be thrown open to settlement and cultivation—exhaustless mineral wealth has yet to be developed—and the most extensive and valuable fisheries in the world are those of the British American Colonies. (Cheers.) Whether the day for its accomplishment has yet arrived is a fit subject of enquiry, but assuredly no Canadian has a claim to the name of statesman, who has not looked forward to the day when all the British portion of this continent shall be gathered into one. (Cheers.) It cannot be that these great Provinces shall always be permitted to hold their present relations to the mother country. We cannot expect that Britain will always, without consideration, send her navy to guard our shores. We cannot expect that British troops shall always, without consideration, stand ready to defend us against attack. We must look forward to the day when the whole of British America shall stand together; and, in close alliance and heartiest sympathy with great Britain, be prepared to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a great and powerful nation. But, gentlemen, the first step towards the accomplishment of all this, is to settle our political institutions on a sound and healthy basis—to inspire peace and harmony at home and confidence abroad. (Cheers.) It does appear to me that with the settlement of the great grievance that has so long distracted our country, a new era of prosperity will speedily open upon us. The bitter sectional strifes of the past will be forgotten—the great dividing questions of the day will be schemes of public improvement—the development of our internal navigation—the extension of our foreign commerce—the advancement of our agricultural interests—and the deeply important issues of political economy and social reform. But I am afraid I have already detained you far too long. I thank you most heartily for the attention you have given me, and for all the kindness I have received at your hands. (Cheers.) Only remember this—that a hard battle has yet to be fought—that the end is not yet gained, and can only be gained by the hearty co-operation of all the friends of those who have staked so much on the accomplishment of this great reform. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

