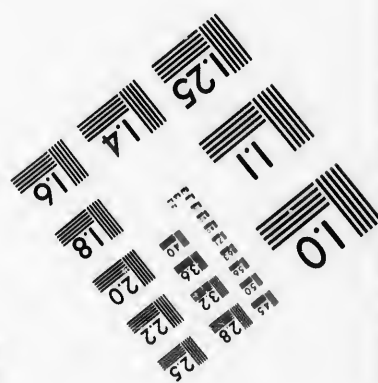
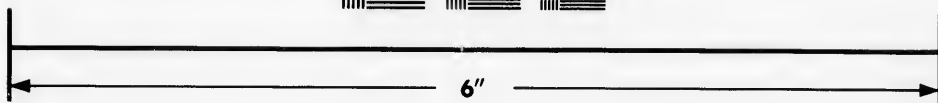
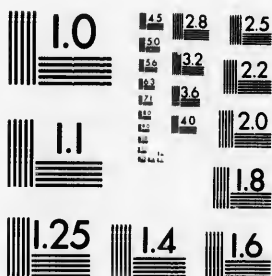


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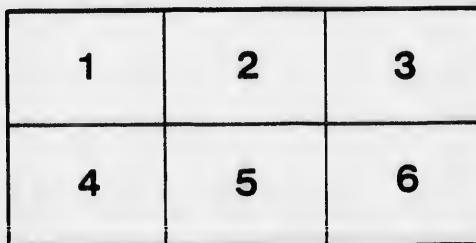
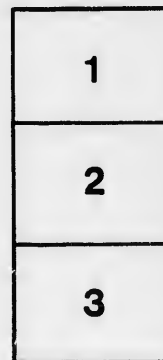
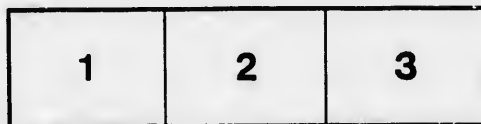
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To the Honorable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland,
in Parliament assembled.

THE PETITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF NOVA SCOTIA HUMBLY SHEWETH :

That the Province of Nova Scotia is one of the oldest Colonies of Great Britain, and one of the nearest to the Mother Country.

That when the American Revolution separated thirteen English Colonies from the Crown, Nova Scotia stood true to her allegiance, and furnished a home for the Loyalists who sacrificed their property and their prospects in the American States for the sake of British connection.

That, ever since, during the political agitations which have disturbed this Continent,—especially during the War of 1812, and the Canadian Rebellions of 1837–8,—Nova Scotia has been steadfast in her loyalty; and that when the neighbouring Province of New Brunswick was menaced from the American side in 1839, the Legislature of Nova Scotia unanimously placed the whole revenues and resources of the country at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor for the defence of the British flag upon the frontier.

That this people have discharged, in other respects, the duties of British subjects to the satisfaction of the Crown. They have sent representatives to the Provincial Parliament since 1758, for a quarter of a century have enjoyed Responsible Government in as full and ample a measure as have their fellow-subjects in the most favoured parts of the Empire, and have preserved from degeneracy and abuse their Constitutional rights and free institutions.

That the people of this Province, from their Maritime position, have developed the pursuits of Shipbuilding, Navigation, Commerce, and Fishing, into prosperous activity. Their agricultural resources are rich and varied, while the vast mineral wealth which underlies the whole area of the country is a special guarantee of its future prosperity under favourable political conditions. The gold mines of Nova Scotia, without rising to the character of dazzling lotteries to attract a promiscuous or disorderly population from abroad, have proved steadily remunerative as a regular department of native industry, and a profitable investment for foreign capital. The great iron mines, already discovered, give earnest, in connection with its coal fields, of manufacturing capabilities not inferior to those of any country of similar extent. It has the thickest coal seams in the world, and their area is extensive, affording fair ground for the presumption, that for the purposes of peace or war Nova Scotia's continued connection with Great Britain would prove of mutual advantage. Possessed of these resources, the people desire closer relations with the Mother Country, in order to be able to enjoy more largely the benefits, as well as share more fully the responsibilities, of the Empire; and already the Province has enrolled 60,000 efficient Militia and Volunteers to assist in the maintenance of British power on this Continent, and sends to sea 440,000 tons of shipping, built and owned within the Province, bearing the flag of England, and manned by more than 20,000 seamen.

That Nova Scotia has no controversies with the Mother Country, the other Provinces, or with the population of the neighboring United States; and highly prizes the privileges, so long enjoyed, of regulating her own Tariffs, and conducting trade, but lightly burthened, with the British Islands and Colonies in all parts of the world, and with Foreign Countries.

That the people of Nova Scotia are prepared to entertain any propositions by which (preserving to them the Institutions they now have, and the privileges they enjoy,) greater facilities for commercial and social intercourse with other States and Provinces may be secured, and they are willing, whenever their own coasts and harbors are safe, to aid Her Majesty's forces to preserve from aggression the Provinces in the rear.

But they view with profound distrust and apprehension schemes, recently propounded, by which it is proposed to transfer to the people of Canada the control of the Government, Legislation and Revenues, of this loyal and happy Province, and they venture respectfully to crave from your honorable House justice and protection.

That the Province of Canada lies as far from Nova Scotia as Austria does from England, and there exists no reason why a people who live at such a distance, with whom we have but little commerce, who have invested no capital in our country, who are unable to protect it, and are themselves shut off from ocean navigation by frost for five months of the year, should control our Legislation and Government.

That in 1864 the Government of Nova Scotia, without any authority from the Legislature, and without any evidence of the consent of the people, sent delegates to Canada to arrange in secret conference at Quebec a political union between the various Provinces. That these delegates concealed the result of their conference from the people until it became incidentally made public in another Province, and that, to this hour, they have never unfolded portions of the Scheme, having the most essential relation to the peculiar interests and local government of Nova Scotia subsequent to Confederation.

That the Scheme, when at last made public, was received with great dissatisfaction in Nova Scotia, that the opposition to it has been constantly on the increase, and has been intensified by the conduct of the government and the delegates, who now propose to call in the aid of Your Honourable House, to assist them to overthrow, by an arbitrary exercise of power, free Institutions enjoyed for a century, and never abused.

2/ That the objections of the people to the proposed Confederation Scheme affect not merely minor local details but the radical principles of the plan. The people cannot recognize the necessity for change in their present tranquil, prosperous and free condition. They cannot believe that the proposed Confederation with the distant Colony of Canada will prove of any practical benefit, either for defence or trade; while, from the past history of that country, its sectional troubles, and its eccentric political management and financial embarrassments, they have great reason to fear that Confederation would be to them a most disastrous change, retarding their progress, and rendering their prolonged connection with the Crown precarious if not impossible. Forming, as she does now, a portion of the Empire, Nova Scotia is already Confederated with fifty other States and Provinces, enjoys free trade with two hundred and fifty millions of people, living under one flag, and owning the authority of one Sovereign. She has no desire to part with her self-control, or to narrow her commercial privileges by placing herself under the dominion of a sister Colony, with an exposed frontier, frost-bound for a third of the year, and with no Navy to defend the Maritime Provinces when her ports are open.

The Scheme of Government framed at Quebec is unlike any other that History shows to have been successful. It secures neither the consolidation, dignity and independent power of Monarchy, nor the checks and guards which ensure to the smaller states self-government, and controlling influence over the Federal authorities, in the neighboring Republic. By adopting the Federal principle sectionalism in the five Provinces is perpetuated; by the timid and imperfect mode in which that principle is applied, the people, whose minds have been unsettled by this crude experiment, may be driven to draw contrasts, and nourish aspirations of which adventurous and powerful neighbors will not be slow to take advantage; and the people of Nova Scotia have no desire to peril the integrity of the Empire, with the blessings they now enjoy, or to try new experiments, which may complicate foreign relations, and yet add no real strength to the Provinces it is proposed to combine.

o The people object also to the financial arrangements, as especially burthen-
some and unfair to this Province. Having long enjoyed the control and benefited by the expenditure of their own revenues, they cannot approve a scheme that will wrest the greater part of these from their hands, to keep up costly and cumbersome Federal machinery, and to meet the liabilities of Canada.

o For many years the commercial policy of Nova Scotia has been essentially different from that of Canada. The latter country, partly from necessity arising out of financial embarrassments, and partly as an indirect premium on her own manufactures, has adopted a tariff varying from 20 to 30 per cent. on imported goods.

Almost surrounded, as Nova Scotia is by the ocean, her people are favourably situated for enjoying free commercial intercourse with every section of the British Empire, and with those foreign countries open to her commerce by the enlightened policy of the Parent State; of this privilege she has availed herself, by imitating, as far as local circumstances would permit, the liberal and free trade policy of the Mother Country—ten per cent. being the ad valorem duty collected under the Nova Scotia tariff on goods imported into the Province. The proposed scheme of union will give Canada, by her large preponderance in the Legislature, the power to shape the tariff for the whole Confederacy according to her inland ideas and necessities, so as to levy the same onerous duties on British goods imported into Nova Scotia as are now exacted by Canada.

That since the Confederation scheme has been announced, there have been special parliamentary elections in three out of the eighteen counties of this Province, and in all three it has been condemned at the polls.

That in 1865 the scheme was condemned at nearly every public meeting held by the delegates to discuss it, and numerous petitions against its adoption were presented to the Provincial Parliament, and only one in its favor, until the leader of the Government declared the measure to be "impracticable".

That at the opening of the late Session no reference to Confederation was made in the speech of the Lieutenant Governor, and down to a late period the people of Nova Scotia were led to believe that the scheme had been abandoned. A Resolution was introduced toward the close of the Session, clothing the Government with power to appoint Delegates, who, in connection with Delegates from the other Provinces, are to frame a scheme of Government, to which it is proposed to ask the sanction of your Honorable House before it has been submitted to the Legislature that it may annihilate, or to the people, whose legal and constitutional rights and powers it may transfer or circumscribe.

3/ The undersigned, menaced by a measure that may be revolutionary, repose implicit confidence in the protection of the Imperial Parliament. They deny the authority of their own Legislature, invested with limited powers for a definite term, to deprive them of rights earned by their ancestry by the most painful sacrifices, wisely exercised, and never abused, for more than a century, and which they had no legitimate authority to alienate or break down. They believe that any scheme of Government, framed by a Committee of Delegates and forced upon the Provinces without their revision or approval, would generate wide-spread dissatisfaction among a loyal and contented people; who will not fail to reflect, that no change can be made in the constitution of any of the neighboring States which has not first been approved by the electors; and that important measures, affecting Imperial policy or institutions, are rarely attempted till they have been submitted for acceptance or rejection by the people whose interests they are to affect.

2/ Your petitioners therefore pray that Your Right Honorable House will be pleased to defer all action in favour of Confederation in the Imperial Parliament until the people of Nova Scotia shall have exercised and enjoyed their Constitutional privilege to express their opinions at the polls, or that Your Honorable House may be pleased to direct that a Special Committee shall ~~shall~~ inquire into all the features of the proposed scheme of Confederation, as it is likely to affect the several Provinces in their relations to each other and to the Mother Country; or that the people of Nova Scotia be permitted to appear by counsel at the Bar of Your Honorable House to defend their interests and Institutions. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

