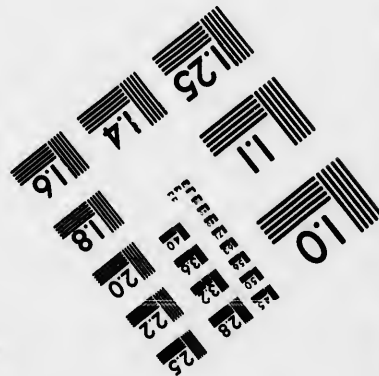
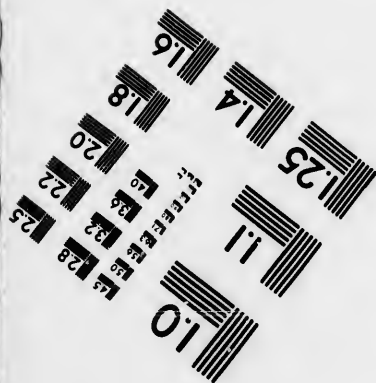
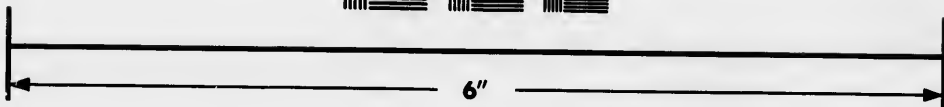
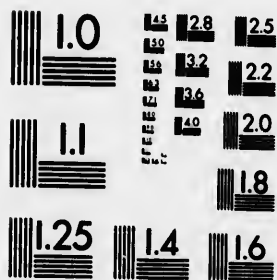


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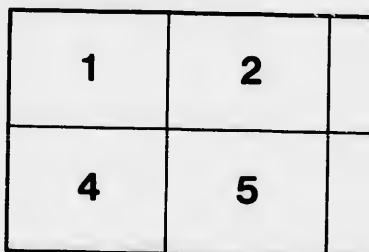
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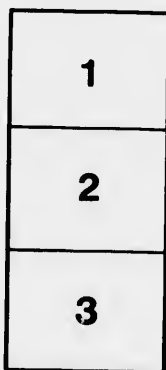
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REMARKS

UPON THE

Proposed Federation of the Provinces.

Festina lente.

BY A NOVA SCOTIAN.

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REMARKS

UPON THE

PROPOSED FEDERATION OF THE PROVINCES.

THE deliberations of the delegates at Quebec, on the subject of the Union of the Colonies, being terminated, and what is stated to be the Constitution of the proposed Federation allowed to circulate without contradiction in the local papers, we may fairly consider that document as public property. The time is arrived, when we may, without prejudice, discuss the question. Whatever his ideas may be as to the feasibility of the plan, or the hasty manner in which it is feared the people of this Province may be called upon to adopt it, the writer wishes to disclaim at the outset any intention of presuming to dictate what the policy of Nova Scotia should be, or to reflect in any but honorable terms upon the delegates who went to Quebec to represent our interests. These pages are but the expression of an individual opinion, which may or may not, meet with approval. The fact that the writer neither is nor has been in any way connected with the politics of the country, and has no personal interest to serve, beyond the common interest which we have all at stake, may, perhaps, claim for his remarks the merit of being disinterested.

time for us to speak out on this subject, and it is from a Nova Scotian point of view that it is proposed to examine the question.

The present is a time for careful thought and reflection by all who feel interested in the welfare of their country. It is the crisis in our history,—the turning point in our fortunes,—an occasion which calls for the exercise of great caution and careful deliberation. Our present position is one of increasing prosperity at home, and good credit abroad. Let us be careful how we choose another path.

If the results of the proposed change are to be as beneficial as the speeches of Canadian statesmen, and editorials in the larger number of our newspapers, would have us believe, they would assuredly not be diminished by a reasonable delay. On the other hand, should it be found on examination that the arguments used in its favor are not so sound as they appear at first sight, how much reason shall we not have to rejoice, that we did not hurriedly adopt measures never to be undone, or form new connexions never to be broken?

It is not to the purpose here, to go into the whole subject from its initiation, or to recapitulate the reasons which from time to time, during the last few years, have been advanced to prove to us that a Union of the Provinces is absolutely necessary to our future well-being, and even existence. These reasons may be reduced to four leading ones.

1st.—Mutual defence.

2nd.—Rapid growth of Commerce.

3rd.—Intercolonial Railway.

4th.—National importance.

Let us examine them under their separate heads, as far as they concern our own Province, and discarding all Utopian ideas about *size and grandeur*, calmly inquire to what extent they claim the consideration of us Nova Scotians.

First.—The rapid growth of the military element in the neighboring Republic,—the vast armies there kept in the field, and the acknowledged difficulty which will present itself at the close of the civil war, of finding employment for the large standing army to be maintained for the future, have, coupled with the supposed animosity that exists against the government of Great Britain, been among the causes to awaken alarm in the minds of many men both in Canada and in England. With an extensive frontier almost entirely unprotected, and with no adequate force properly prepared to take the field, the position of Canada, having a neighbor of such formidable power and aggressive dispositions, is a source of some anxiety, and was still more so a year ago. In the face of this danger, the people and government of Canada exhibited a supineness which called forth the strongest language from the English press. With few exceptions, the Volunteer movement was confined to the larger towns, and even there the number of men who thought it necessary to prepare to defend the country, was comparatively small. The militia organization proceeded but slowly, and an almost culpable apathy seemed to prevade the system. What wonder if people in England were heard to say: “We like the Canadians very well,—we are prepared to defend them from foreign aggression, if they will but show by their

acts that they consider the connexion worth maintaining; but we do not care to fight for fellow-subjects who are continually singing, 'God save the Queen,' and boasting of British freedom, yet make no preparation to defend the sovereignty of the one, or maintain the possession of the other."

Happily a different state of affairs has been brought about in Canada, and measures are now in force to put the local defences on a proper footing. No one doubts with what results the Canadians would meet any encroachment on their frontier; but as has been truly said, "a strong defence is one of the surest guarantees of peace."

It is argued that by a Union of the Provinces, the means of defence would be largely increased. Supposing the parent government to furnish the chief portion of arms and ammunition, the element of defence to be provided by us would be, properly drilled officers and men; and it is not clear how the mere fact of our being joined under a Federal Government would suddenly magnify the number of able-bodied men in British North America. Nor is it certain that any large portion of our forces could be spared to march to the defence of the Canadian frontier. Doubtless, thirty thousand men from here would be a most acceptable addition to the Canadians, but would not our own country be left unprotected? The desire of the Federal Government (in which it seems our voice would be very weak) to secure a large additional force is very natural, and the wish would certainly be father to the deed. But it is equally certain that if the supposed enemy were to detach a portion of his army to attack Nova Scotia,

maintaining his threatening attitude with the remainder, not a man would be sent here from Canada. Of course we would all do our best to help one another, should any difficulty arise, but it remains to be explained how a Federal Union is to increase our *means of doing so*, though it seems quite clear that the disposal of our forces would be taken out of our hands. Great extent of territory is a cause of weakness in a military point of view, and if we, with our small population, are to contribute men for the defence of the country all the way from here to Vancouver's Island, the sooner we are plainly told so, the better. This first reason, therefore, for a Federation, can have but little weight with Nova Scotians. A defensive alliance would be quite as efficacious, more consonant with the feelings of the local Militia, and, perhaps, a little cheaper than the book-keeping-by-double-entry system, of a Legislature here and another one in Ottawa.

The *second* argument used to show the necessity of an immediate federation, is, that a rapid growth of Commerce would be the sure result. The most specious arguments have been used on this point, and an edifice of rapidly attained commercial greatness has been built on a foundation of sand. Had Nova Scotia been represented at the Conference by any one connected with the trade and commerce of the country, some answer might have been made to the statement that we, instead of manufacturing for 400,000 people would become manufacturers for 4,000,000! What do we manufacture that the Canadians would take from us? With our extensive sea coast, and a corresponding

difficulty in preventing smuggling, our true policy would seem to be, to keep our "ad valorem" duties at the lowest possible rate. We have the products of our mines, our timber, and our fish, to exchange on reciprocal terms, and we build large numbers of ships, but we are not properly, a manufacturing people. It is immaterial to us whether the Canadian "ad valorem" rate is 20 or 10 per cent., but it is of the utmost importance not to have the former rate established here, for, with our numerous harbors, it would simply be a premium on dishonesty. The Grand Trunk Railway, and the River St. Lawrence, being the two inlets for goods into Canada, there is not much difficulty in protecting the revenue, but a glance at the map shows us how different it would be here. It is not intended to insinuate that evasions of the law would be of common occurrence: it is enough for us to know that the system, although it suits the Canadians and protects their manufactures, would be an impracticable one here, and would offer a temptation to dishonesty, by yielding to which, a trader in any of our ports could inflict the greatest injury on his honest competitors.

One of the first results of placing the adjustment of our tariff in the control of a legislature, of which *nineteen in one hundred and ninety-four members*, are to be Nova Scotians, would be a large increase in our ad valorem rate, and instead of Nova Scotia finding customers for articles out of her power to supply, the Cotton and Woolen Manufactures of Canada would find in us 400,000 additional consumers. Instead of largely increasing our trade, this federation will strike a severe blow at it to the benefit of Canadian manufacturers; a high tariff

will curtail our imports, and consequently injure the carrying trade of the Province. A leading journal in this city, supposed to be the government organ, spoke a few days ago of these provinces having each its own small government, small legislation, small currency, and small tariff system. Mark the words, "*small tariff system*"! How disgraceful, that our ad valorem rate is only ten per cent, while that of Canada is twenty per cent! What do the trading classes of Nova Scotia say to that? Of course we shall be promised that only a slight increase shall take place in our taxation, but every one knows how the plea of necessity can be used. If we once relinquish the control of our own purse strings, we shall never recover it.

The *third* reason for an immediate federation, is the building of the railway from Truro to Riviere du Loup, and the construction of the line is held out as a bait to draw us into the scheme. It is boldly asserted that the road never will be built, unless we join the union, and many men who were inclined to oppose the federation, have been heard to acquiesce in it as the only means to obtain the railway. But, on reflection, it will perhaps be granted that this railway is to be of more importance to Canada than to us. If an anxiety on account of the growing strength of a neighboring power really exist in the upper provinces, they assuredly will not long refuse to enter into arrangements which will give them a connection with the Atlantic, through British territory. Whether is it more important for us to have access to Western Canada in the winter, or for the inhabitants of that country to have free access to an Atlantic port?

The construction of this road is a consummation heartily desired; it will be a great benefit to this city, and to the province generally; but to tell us that it cannot be built without a federation of the Provinces, and that it never will be done unless we yield to the terms proposed, is to take for granted that the inhabitants of Canada, of Nova Scotia, and of New Brunswick, will allow themselves to be led on for ever by interested politicians, and that when this railway becomes a necessity we will not stir in the matter, without asking permission of the powers that be. If the railway is to be a means of protection, it is assuredly more needed by the Canadians than by us, and it will not be possible for any party to carry on the government of Canada for any long period without yielding to the demand, which is fast gaining ground in those Provinces, for a secure access to the Atlantic ocean. Because it was necessary to build a railway from Brussels to Paris, did the French propose to the Belgians to form a federation and give a legislature in Paris control over their affairs? If any two or more governments in Europe wish to be connected by railways, is a federation considered necessary? Let us have the railway to Quebec first, and when we and the Canadians become better acquainted, and our interests more identified, it will be time enough to urge the necessity of a federal union.

The *last reason* for a federal union of the Provinces, its national importance, has had much weight with many men, and visions of a national greatness, and a status among the powers of the world, have filled their imaginations. It is said that we are now a small province, with a small population, small revenue, small ideas,

small trade, small everything; but that on the day we enter this federation, all these things will suddenly grow larger. That we shall no longer have to be ashamed of a small tariff, and a small debt, will be very soon made clear to us,—but it remains to be shown how the increase of our population will be more rapid, as a result of the federation, or that our ideas will be expanded by exchanging our present independent position for that of an outlying section of this proposed grand empire, in the management of whose affairs we shall have very little to say. But, it is argued, we ought to be ashamed to be only Nova Scotians, or, as a Canadian orator declared here in the Temperance Hall, to make ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world by hailing from such a place. This is certainly narrowing the question, when it is brought down to an affair of one's address in an hotel book! This is a British Province,—and to be born in a British Province is, in our opinion, the next best thing in the world to being born in the old country. It is devoutly to be hoped that we may continue in this position towards the parent state, and as long as this is the case, *our* nationality is the nationality of Great Britain, the sovereign of the United Kingdom is *our* sovereign, the honor of the British flag is *our* honor. Would this nationality be changed by the proposed federation? Would we be any the less British subjects? The distinction is without a difference, between saying one is a native of the British Province of Nova Scotia, or a native of the Province of Nova Scotia, one of the Federated British Provinces of North America. We have no status whatever among the nations of the world, except the status of British subjects, and it will be difficult,

whatever the *ulterior views* of Canadian politicians may be, to persuade the people of Nova Scotia to accept of any other. It is premature to talk of abolishing the distinctions between Canadians, New Brunswickers and Nova Scotians, and the very plan of this federation, with its separate Legislature for each Province, will tend to foster local jealousies. We in Nova Scotia, have our own history and name, not so easily obliterated from our minds. Are the natives of Bohemia or the Tyrol, any the less Bohemians and Tyroleans, because they form a part of the Austrian Empire? The same language is used, the same religion prevails, many customs are alike, but the distinction in name remains. Many instances might be noticed of a like tendency to conserve these separate names, though where patriotism does not exist, a people may be found to be indifferent to the name of their country being effaced from the map, in exchange for a new one. Our Province is at present prosperous, and progressing rapidly, our burdens are light, we are well able to meet our obligations, and an increasing revenue gives us the means of gradually extending our railways, and improving our public works. Are we prepared to see our taxation doubled, and to relinquish the management of our affairs, in exchange for high-sounding names, and dreams of a national importance beyond that of British subjects? In the march of events the time may come when the mother country may ask us to establish a nationality for ourselves and maintain it, but that day is far remote, and a federation now, on the grounds of giving us a nationality of our own, is wildly premature. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the English nation will not yield these Provinces to any invader, so long as

we show *by our acts* that we value the connexion, and will do what in us lies to maintain it.

These, then, are the four reasons advanced, to show us the necessity of an immediate federal union of the Provinces. Repeating that at present it is from a Nova Scotia point of view only that we are looking at them, we ask, do they seem good ones to us?

It may be said, that we ought to sink all petty differences about the interests of one Province or another, and that we shall receive an equivalent for anything we lose. When, at some future day, the time may come for a legislative union, we shall be prepared to give and take in a liberal spirit. That, however, is not the question. What we are called upon to do, is to decide whether this federation is necessary; and, if so, are we willing to join it on the terms proposed? Moreover, let us see that *we decide this momentous question for ourselves*, and do not allow ourselves to be handed over to the Canadians, by a vote of the House of Assembly. Whatever desires many of that body may have to consummate this federation, they were not elected to hand over the government of this Province, and such an act is beyond their functions.

No one has convinced us that this plan is necessary, or even expedient, but it does not require much reflection to see on which side all the advantages are to be. The carrying out of it, is of great importance to Canada, and to aggrandize those Provinces, we are to yield up our valuable seaboard, to relinquish the control of our revenue, to submit to an increase of taxation, to abrogate our independence, to change our name. The advantages

we are to derive, are, the privilege of sending our soldiers to Canada in time of war, the benefit of being customers of Canadian manufacturers, and the idea that we shall be something instead of nothing, as it is said we are now !

It is perhaps unnecessary to discuss the proposed constitution, or to go at large into its provisions. It seems we are to have a Legislature in Halifax, empowered to go into debt for us, and another one at Ottawa, equally authorized to incur liabilities on our account. If we add to these the proclivity of the City Council for borrowing money, we shall have formidable burdens in a few years time—most unacceptable legacies to our children. There is no function of the proposed federal parliament which cannot either be performed by the local legislatures, or regulated by interprovincial treaties. A uniform postage rate and currency do not necessitate a federal union. It is quite clear, however, that a very great additional outlay must be incurred, if we are to maintain a legislature, and a large staff of officials, here, and to pay a portion of the cost of a far more expensive establishment at Ottawa. Would these two legislatures work in harmony, or are not difficulties likely to arise regarding their separate powers? Who shall decide how much money the Federal Government may borrow, and how much the local? Would a law passed here, come into force after receiving the assent of the Federal Government? Surely not — unless it is proposed to ignore the British Government. It remains to be proved what are the advantages of this double system. When the proper time arrives, the union of British North America, will be a legislative and not a federal one.

The Federal Government is to appoint our Governor. That official coming here from England is often a man of rank, selected for the position, a stranger to local parties, and removed from the suspicion of a leaning towards any political section. He has invariably commanded the respect of the population over whom he is sent to govern, and among whom he is to represent the person of his sovereign, the fountain of honor. To him we bow our heads and give deference, wishing to show, through him, our respect for the person and authority of the sovereign. How different would be the feelings with which we would regard a man appointed to the post from one of the Provinces, and fresh from the struggle of party strife! He would have strong political sympathies or perhaps animosities, for we may rest assured that these and all other offices will be conferred upon the professional politicians, who strive the hardest in the interest of their party. Suppose him to be appointed for five years, and that in the year following his appointment his friends at Ottawa lose the seals of office. How admirably our local Governor would work with the new ministry but twelve months ago his strong opponents! How careful he would be to do nothing to assist his friends! How harmoniously everything would work!

Reference has been made above to the increase of our taxation, which is to be a sure result of this federation. We should not have so often alluded to this point, if any *single tangible advantage* had occurred to us, as the result. We are rich enough to build our own share of the Interprovincial Railway; it is clear to us that a low tariff best suits our maritime position; we are willing enough to form a union of British America when the

country is sufficiently populated and developed ; but we refuse to have our duties raised to the Canadian standard. Let us wait until they are in a position to lower their scale to ours. If the political leaders of Nova Scotia think they will personally have much to do with the administration of the Federal Government, they are grievously mistaken. The very appointment of our Judges will be made from Canada. Specious promises are very well, and pledges are often meant to be kept ; but the experience of other nations teaches us how little share a small Province like ours would have in the management of affairs. Treaty obligations have not always been binding, in the relations of the strong towards the weak.

Let us therefore say to our Canadian fellow-subjects, we think the time is not yet arrived for a Union. We will build the Interprovincial Railway with you and New Brunswick ; we will equalize our rates of Postage, and adopt the same Currency ; but we cannot at present consent to raise our tariff as high as yours, or undertake a large increase of burdens with no adequate compensation.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to repeat that he has looked at this question purely from a Nova Scotian point of view, the only proper way for us to look at it. Fanciful ideas are one thing, tangible advantages another. Let us hold on our present course of happiness and prosperity, until some one can persuade us a change is necessary to preserve or increase these blessings.

A Legislative Union of the Lower Provinces might be attended with considerable advantages ; and after we are properly consolidated it will be time enough to talk of a Federation of British North America. The Canadians will be very glad to accept us and our seaboard, whenever we offer them. A Legislative Union of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, will not be difficult to bring about, if the jealousies of political parties can be mollified, and if our intelligent press will guide public opinion in the proper direction.

