



Imperial Federation

LEAGUE



OTTAWA BRANCH.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1888.

ADDRESS

Mr. Sandford Fleming, C.M.G.

In Moving the Adoption Thereof.

ORGANIZED NOVEMBER 8TH, 1887.

OTTAWA, CANADA.

- New South Wales
- New Zealand
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Cape of Good Hope
- Honduras
- Leeward Islds.
- Labuan
- Heligoland
- Jamaica
- W. Af. Settlements
- Hong Kong
- Fiji Islands
- Mauritius

- Queensland
- W. Australia
- Ceylon
- Natal
- Guiana
- Windward Islds.
- Trinidad
- Bahamas
- New Guinea
- Straits Settlements
- St. Helena
- Cyprus
- Bermuda
- Gibraltar

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IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE.

OTTAWA BRANCH.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Submitted January 18th, 1888.

Your Committee in submitting this the First Annual Report of the Ottawa Branch of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, beg, at the outset, to draw your attention to the fact that owing to the organization of the Branch in November 1887, and a subsequent desire on the part of the members to have the year commence in January, this the first Annual Report will necessarily embrace the proceedings of the Branch from the date of its organization to the expiry of the year 1888.

The idea of forming an Ottawa Branch of the League was first considered by certain members of the Executive Committee of the League in Canada, resident in Ottawa, and as a result of their deliberation a meeting of those in sympathy with the objects of the League was duly called, and held on the 8th day of November, 1887.

At this meeting the resolutions passed by the Conference held in London, England, on the 28th of July, 1884, and in Montreal, on the 9th of May, 1885, were considered and adopted. The sense of the meeting being unanimously in favor of the formation of a Branch of the League in Ottawa, a resolution to this effect was carried and consequent thereupon those active in organization of the Branch caused to be issued lists for

membership, headed with the several resolutions above referred to, and as evidencing the active interest and sympathy of the public in our organization, a very few days thereafter some one hundred and fifty members were enrolled.

A meeting was then called for organization on November 24th, at which provisional office-bearers and members of Committee were selected. The meeting was largely attended. Mr. Dalton McCarthy, Q. C., M. P., President of the League in Canada, was present and delivered an address explanatory of the objects and aims of the League.

On December 15th following, a meeting was held at which the provisional president, Mr. Sandford Fleming, C. M. G., delivered his inaugural address. He dealt minutely with the history of the League from the date of its organization in England, explained the objects and dwelt on the necessity of an increased interest in furthering the same.

The Branch held during the winter, a series of meetings at which papers were read and subjects of interest discussed.

On April 23rd, while Parliament was in session, a public meeting was held under the auspices of the Branch. Many members of Parliament were present. Addresses were delivered by Messrs. McNeil, M. P., vice-president of the League in Canada, Josiah Wood, M. P., General Laurie, M. P., Colonel Dennison, M. P. and others. The meeting passed four important resolutions, viz :—

1. That this meeting hails with pleasure the establishment of a branch of the Imperial Federation League in this city, and confidently hopes that through its instrumentality, the objects of the League may be advanced, and the ties which bind Canada to the motherland maintained and strengthened.

2. That in the opinion of this meeting, the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests of the Colonies and the Mother Country would be greatly promoted by such modifications in the various fiscal policies adopted within the Empire, as would give to each of its members advantages in their several markets withheld from foreign countries; and this

meeting respectfully suggests that parliament should, in its wisdom consider the advisability of entering into negotiations with the Imperial authorities for carrying out such a policy.

3. That it is unreasonable to expect from any particular quarter, without consulting with the representatives of all the interests involved, the enunciation of an elaborate scheme for the federation of a world-wide Empire ; but, this meeting can point with no little satisfaction to the recent Imperial Conference (one of the first fruits of the efforts of the League) regarding which the Prime Minister of England has said "it will be the parent of a long progeniture, and distant Councils of the Empire may, in some far-off time, look back to it as the root from which all their greatness and all their beneficence sprang."

4. Having in view the general advantage, the supremacy of British commerce on the Pacific, and a more perfect unification of the Empire, it is important that the most satisfactory trade relations and the most friendly intimacy be established between Canada and Australia ; and, in the opinion of this meeting, the attainment of these important objects would be greatly facilitated by a Conference of delegates from these countries to devise means for the development of trade and commerce between the Dominion and our sister colonies in the South Pacific.

In pursuance of the fourth Resolution the Committee in the name of the Ottawa Branch addressed a memorial to His Excellency the Governor General in Council, of which the following is a copy.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable the Marquis of Lansdowne, Governor General of Canada in Council.

The Memorial of the Ottawa Branch of the Imperial Federation League respectfully sheweth :—

That the people of Canada and Australia have no social or commercial relations, that they are practically without intercourse, and have but little knowledge of each other.

That until recently, owing to geographical circumstances, no intimate relations were possible, but the consummation of the union of British

Columbia with old Canada, by the construction of the National Railway, has completely changed the conditions and opened up the way for great possibilities in trade and commerce between the Dominion and the Sister Colonies in the South Pacific.

That it is of great importance to establish trade and friendly intimacy between those two great divisions of the British Empire.

Your Memorialists believe that the attainment of these objects would be greatly facilitated by a conference of delegates representing the Canadian and Australian Governments. Wherefore your Memorialists desire to express the hope that your Excellency will be pleased to take step to invite the Australian Government and the Government of New Zealand to join in constituting a conference to devise means for the development of reciprocal trade and commerce.

And Your Memorialists, as in duty bound will ever pray.

Chairman of the Branch, SANDFORD FLEMING.

Vice Chairmen..... { B. CHAMBERLAIN,
A. H. TAYLOR,
SHERIFF SWEETLAND,

Treasurer..... THOS. MACFARLANE.

Secretary R. G. CODE.

Committee—John P. Featherstone, McLeod Stewart, J. B. Hurlbert, Col. Thos. Ross, J. R. Armstrong, John Macoun, F. Bebbington, J. A. Gemmill.

Ottawa May 1st, 1888.

It may not be out of place to mention that following the action taken by the Ottawa Branch, similar memorials were afterwards forwarded from Toronto, Halifax and other places where Branches of the League are established. When the Governor General visited Toronto in March last, a deputation waited upon His Excellency and submitted to him the great importance which was to be attached to the establishment of a more perfect means of communication between Australia and Canada, and to the promotion of mutual trade relations between the two countries. Before Lord Lansdowne left Canada, a deputation of Members of Parliament waited

upon His Excellency, urging the views which were first expressed in the memorial of the Ottawa Branch, and the resolutions passed at the public meeting referred to.

Your Committee have the great satisfaction to report that the Government of Canada have formally invited the Australian Government and the Government of New Zealand to send delegates to a conference to be held in Ottawa, for the discussion of matters pertaining to reciprocal trade and commerce, as well as to consider the practicability of a joint effort to lay a Pacific Cable between Vancouver and New Zealand.

Your Committee look hopefully forward to the good results which they believe will be an outcome of this conference, and it must be gratifying to all the members that the first movement in the matter took its origin with the Ottawa Branch.

Your Committee considered it advisable to issue in pamphlet form the Rules and Regulations governing the Branch. This has been done and copies thereof distributed among the members.

Your Committee are strongly impressed with the fact that the principle upon which the League appeals to the public should be thoroughly understood, and to this end they would suggest the great necessity of circulating, as widely as possible, the monthly Journal of the League "Imperial Federation." By arrangement this publication can be supplied at the reduced rate of fifty cents per annum.

Your Committee refer with pleasure to the existence of Branches of the League in a great many of the centres of commerce of the Dominion, and to the frequent and encouraging reports of the formation of new Branches; all showing the earnest and widespread desire amongst the people of Canada for closer and more intimate union and relationship with Great Britain—the heart of the Empire.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

SANDFORD FLEMING, C. M. G.,
President.

R. G. CODE,
Hon. Secretary.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MR. SANDFORD FLEMING, C. M. G. IN MOVING THE
ADOPTION OF THE FOREGOING REPORT.

GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with the practice followed in England it is customary for the chairman in moving the adoption of the annual report to submit some explanatory observations. I ask your permission, therefore, to offer the following remarks. I must farther ask you to hold the Managing Committee in no way responsible for the opinions I express. I simply submit my own views as an individual member. I believe that they will be found in no way incompatible with the report submitted, and it will be highly gratifying to me if they should harmonize with the views and opinions of the other members of the League. In considering the question from the Canadian, indeed generally from the colonial standpoint, the impression has been forced upon me, that the name taken by our association is, in some respects, not well chosen. It had its origin in England, where no doubt it was considered in all respects to be fit and appropriate. It is scarcely, however, possible for a fellow-subject in the Mother Country to look at the political aspect of a question precisely as we do, as would be the case in the sister colonies of Australia, South Africa and elsewhere. The term Imperial Federation is sufficiently comprehensive, and is in no way defective in meaning or purpose. But it appears to me that to some minds it is suggestive of a great deal too much, certainly much more than is warranted by the aims and objects of the League. By one class the word "Imperial" is objected to; the word "Federation" finds its opponents in another class. The words combined have equal disfavor. In the minds of many the term "Imperial" is associated with "Imperialism," and awakens the dread of despotism, of absolutism, and of what in modern times has been called "Caesarism," the exercise of power and arbitrary authority in a manner offensive and painful to the whole community. The word "Federation," especially when in combination with the first, is also considered to be little less objectionable. It is associated in the minds of many with an affirmation of the principle of centralization of the powers of government in one arbitrary executive; to exercise despotic sway, regardless of the rights, wishes and opinions of the governed.

If we examine the constitution of our association we will find that nothing can be farther from its meaning, nothing more mistaken than such impressions. The only objects aimed at in our constitution are :

1. To promote the discussion of means, whereby the permanent unity of the Empire may be maintained.
2. To further the developments and interchange of the resources of the several provinces of the Empire.
3. To resist any measure tending to disintegration.

In pursuing these objects we are advocating a policy peaceful in its character, and in all respects patriotic and proper. We are not the advocates of any revolutionary project. We have no irrational hopes, no aspirations for the establishment of a despotism ; no formulated scheme to carry out. We have no desire to violate the political rights or disturb the geographical sensibilities of any race, class or individual, who may wish well of his country. (Hear, hear.) If there be a fundamental principle in the constitution of the league more prominent than any other, it is our advocacy of British connection and the desire to strengthen its existing relations. We do not desire to disturb the present union between the different members of the British family as it exists, still less to weaken the bonds which hold them together. We aim at strengthening the attachments of one to the other by the development of intercolonial trade and commerce ; by establishing more satisfactory means of inter-communication ; by cultivating closer friendly relations, and by every proper means we strive to establish a spirit of affinity and affection, with the hope that it will increase as time rolls onward. (Applause.) If in Canada we were called upon to make the selection *de novo* of the title by which the league should be known, it is possible we would prefer some such designation as "The British Alliance" or "British Union League." But, in reality, the name is of secondary importance, provided we perfectly understand the objects we have in view and the purpose to be attained. In its application to the British Empire we must not identify the term "Imperial" with the despotisms of history and the evils to which they gave rise. The British Empire is without a parallel in past centuries ; it is an Empire in which no despot can hold sway ; it is

an Empire which exercises a beneficent influence on the advancement in civilization of the human race. It is an Empire whose standing policy is to maintain peace—the peace of the world. It is a commonwealth holding in alliance many countries, and many nationalities who have been given the principle of free and popular government to work out.

I have stated the objects and fundamental principles of our constitution ; and although some of our members in their individual capacity have with labor and care prepared several projects aiming at the constitutional government of the Empire, the league as a body is in no way responsible for what has thus been proposed. We can simply regard such theories and projects as topics for discussion. We are called upon to listen to every shade of opinion in accordance with the principles we profess ; and it is in the degree that any suggestion is marked by wisdom that it will receive attention. We have been asked by many persons from time to time, what is the scheme of federation which the league advocates. The reply is, we have no scheme to submit, we only court inquiry into the means by which our object can be obtained. We cannot for tell what the future may call forth, but we may say to this extent, that any plan of organization must depend greatly on the conditions under which it is conceived, and must be in accordance with the genius and sentiment of the people interested. To a thoughtful mind it must be obvious that our future political condition must be a matter of development and growth ; the slower the growth, possibly the more satisfactory and the more enduring the result. As the principle of development enters into the history of every political organization, we must look forward to the necessity of permitting time and the natural principle of all life—growth—to exercise its influence in working out our political future. No institutions can attain vitality when founded on discontent. A healthy political organism can only be called into being by the consent of those concerned ; in which the different branches of the Empire, of whatever race or nationality, voluntarily join and form part. One plain condition must be the preservation of all rights now enjoyed. Every self-governing component part must have its influence felt. It is alone on principles of this character we may look for our future national organisa-

tion. It will not be by opposition to established rights, or by violence to political sentiment; not by upheaval of old institutions, or revolutionary or sudden changes giving a shock to old feelings and sensitivities, that we may hope to attain stability. Rather we must look to the process of evolution, to the adoption of means to amend by wise statemanship; content with results, of which the consequences if slow, are sure. It is by the observance of these conditions we may hope for unity and peace and the permanency of our political relationship in the future. The British Empire so developed will possibly bear some resemblance to the banyan tree, of which the main branches themselves become trunks around the parent stem; each individual branch bearing its own fruit, while the whole of the offshoots remain indissolubly connected, to give mutual support and to afford common protection to all seeking shelter beneath the shadow of its widespread foliage. (Applause.)

I can see no cause why the Imperial Federation League need be looked upon with doubt or suspicion by any, excepting such as are hostile to connection with Great Britain, or who seek to dismember the Empire. There need be no fear that any step will be rashly taken. It will be impossible for us to advocate successfully any policy inconsistent with civil and religious freedom. We may rest satisfied that no principle of right or justice will be violated, that no constitutional changes can come into force which will not in every respect be unimpeachable. No scheme, however well matured, can come to be recognized without being accepted and confirmed by the people and country affected by its operation. I feel warranted in saying that no topic for consideration involving issues of equal magnitude can be brought before Her Majesty's subjects in any one of the four continents. The report which has been read sets forth that the Canadian people are becoming alive to its importance. We rejoice to learn that the Canadian Government has taken a wise and practical step by which the objects which the league has in view will be advanced. It is not possible to presage the good results which may be the outcome of the Intercolonial Conference, which there is every prospect will soon be held in this city. (Hear, hear.)

A visit from prominent men invited here from each of the sister Australasian colonies cannot fail to enlighten them regarding the natural wealth and prosperity of this country. It will certainly lead to an interchange of visits, by which, on our side, we will learn with what energy and determination our fellow-colonists beyond the western ocean have developed their resources, and we will thus begin to perceive the general advantages to be attained by closer union of the whole Empire. (Applause.) It may confidently be predicted as one outcome of the conference that the closest connection by electric cable and lines of steamship will be established between the Dominion and Australia, a result which will build up commercial activity on the Pacific and secure the cohesion of these portions of the Empire. (Hear, hear.) I trust that the few words which I have felt it my duty to say will sufficiently establish that it is not proposed by this association that it should elaborate a scheme of federation for the British Empire. The objects which the members of the league desire to attain are nevertheless clearly defined. Their one aim is to assist by every means in their power in shaping our political future, a duty which is equally incumbent upon every man or body of men who live under the protection of British institutions. (Applause.)

The league declares for a United Empire. The report read establishes that, during the first year of its existence, the Ottawa Branch has shown its vitality and given proof of its usefulness. The constitution of the league enables us to enrol as members all who desire to adhere to their allegiance. We may confidently claim the sympathy of every man who has faith in the institutions of his country. We may look for the support of all who are hostile to disunion, to separation or disintegration. We conceive that we are entitled to the friendship and favor of all our countrymen who desire to secure a firm and perpetual alliance with the family of nations with which we are so happily connected, now constituting the British Empire. (Loud applause.)