

The Freeman.

Confederation.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.

Let us now look at our own position, and the scheme of a new constitution which the delegates would have to face upon us.

We are almost wholly unconnected with Canada, the physical conformation of the country renders a closer connection difficult, and the character of our trade would render it of comparatively little value were it effected. We have lumber to sell. Canada does not want to buy any, as she also is a large exporter of lumber. We build ships for sale; so does Canada. The interchange of all the productions of the forest, the sea, the mine and the farm are now free, but the trade is small, for we find elsewhere better markets for what we have to sell, and better markets for what we have to buy.

Territorially we are connected to Canada by a narrow, barren, mountainous strip of land, scarcely fifty miles in width.

The nearest Canadian town of any importance is many hundreds of miles away, and in the centre of a population differing from ours in language, laws and traditions.

Hundreds of miles beyond we come to another people—the population of Upper Canada, whom we do not in all respects resemble. Those two Canadas, joined together by force, have been quarrelling and striving for the mastery for years, until government under the present constitution became almost an impossibility.

We are now asked to join with them in a Confederation, in order, as the Upper Canadians firmly believe, that by our aid, the French Canadians may be reduced to perpetual subjection. The advocates of Union in this Province say that we would always unite with the Lower Canadians to keep Upper Canada in check.

Representation in the Lower House is to be according to population. Lower Canada always having as now sixty-five members, and the other Provinces having their representation relatively increased or diminished according to the relative increase of population in each.

This would be fair enough perhaps if we were all one people, with the same interests, and if Confederation could make us so. But living in this corner of British North America, we are not one either with Upper or Lower Canada, and we can not be one. We have interests peculiar to ourselves and purposes, and a policy of our own. On this side of the Province we all desire Western Extension and further connection with the North Shore. Mr. Cartier, the real Premier of Lower Canada, sneers at the trade with the West as an "old-brother trade," and the route of the Intercolonial Railroad which the new nation, in the councils of which Canada would be supreme, would choose, would be that most inaccessible to the Americans—that which would take the trade not only of Canada, but of our own interior and Gulf Shore populations away from St. John. Canada, on the other hand, desires above all things an enlargement of her canal system, which would involve a cost of many millions, and Upper Canada, which would be the ruling power, would see to open up the North West. All this expenditure would do us no good, and yet we would be called upon to contribute to it, not merely as much as the same number of Canadians, but in reality much more, as under a tariff of fifteen per cent we pay more than Canadians do under a tariff of twenty per cent, and then the tariff would be uniform.

Here, in some of the most important matters to be settled almost at the opening of the new Legislature, we see that our views and interests at once clash with those of the Canadians. In such a case what power or ability would our members have to secure Western Extension for us, or to save us from paying for the Canadian canals, or to render us any service whatever?

Fifteen amongst one hundred and ninety-four at first—amongst a greater number in a few years after.

And these fifteen neither all of the highest character or greatest abilities, nor all united in going to Fredericton for nine or ten weeks, because few men of standing can afford to devote so much time to the public service. Where would the men of worth be found to go to Ottawa for four or five months every year?

Would not our representatives a few years hence be the most worthless of the community, men who had everything to lose because they had nothing to lose by going into politics; men whose great aim would be not so much to serve their country as to win the favour of the Administrator?

Mr. Tilley said at the Institute in reply to this objection, that parties are not evenly balanced in Canada; that even the four representatives from Prince Edward Island could turn the balance. One avowed object of the Confederation scheme is to put an end to that state of things, giving to the French Canadians entire control of all the laws relating to religion and education—reserving the rights of the minority—and preserving their code of Civil laws which they prize so highly. If Confederation succeeded in this, and the French population relieved from all anxiety about their religion, language, and laws, such representatives to the General Parliament to look after only their commercial and political interests, the state of affairs in which four or fifteen could turn the scale would be at an end, and we would find the representatives from the Montreal district at least uniting with the Upper Canadians in forcing on us those schemes for the development of the West for which we indeed would have to pay more than a share, but from which Montreal would derive a great benefit, while we gained a decisive one. If, on the other hand, the scheme is a delusion, and French Canadians are to find their institutions in a much danger as ever, the conflict that is waged so long to the injury of the country, and the benefit of corrupt politicians, is to continue, should we not hesitate to try to solve ourselves in these quarrels, and plunge into the vortex in which Canadian politics are now engulfed?

But could we depend on the fifteen to vote always for their country? Would not such men as we would in all likelihood send there for five years—they took care to provide for a long lease—be more apt to look to their own interests, and become the slaves of their own interests, and become the slaves of the party instead of being the servants of the people?

Mr. Tilley professed a belief that the representatives of the Maritime Provinces would unite with the representatives of Lower Canada to oppose any attempt of Upper Canada to make lavish expenditures in the West, but in reality the representatives of the Lower Pro-

vinces could seldom agree amongst themselves even if they were all most honourable men. On the Intercolonial Railroad question the representatives of the counties on the River St. John would find themselves all alone.

But Upper Canada would soon possess more power than all the others put together. Being a fine agricultural country, her population increases much more rapidly than that of any of the other Provinces. Whereas at about the same rate as Lower Canada, and the number of our representatives therefore would scarcely change; but every ten years the representation of Upper Canada would be enlarged, as will be shown by the following elaborate calculations, which we found some time ago in a Halifax paper:—

1871. Proportion of members to population—1 to 25,000.	Members.
U.C. 2,878,000 population.....	115
N.S. 1,255,000.....	50
N.B. 890,000.....	35
N.E. 378,000.....	15
P.E. 120,000.....	5
Total.....	210

1881. Proportion of members to population—1 to 25,000.	Members.
U.C. 3,448,100 population.....	138
N.S. 1,483,000.....	59
N.B. 1,000,000.....	40
N.E. 475,000.....	19
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Total.....	263

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U.C. 4,099,945 population.....	164
N.S. 1,732,000.....	69
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1901. Proportion of members to population—1 to 25,000.	Members.
U.C. 4,749,633 population.....	189
N.S. 1,937,000.....	77
N.B. 1,260,000.....	50
N.E. 684,288.....	27
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Total.....	352

1911. Proportion of members to population—1 to 25,000.	Members.
U.C. 5,484,100 population.....	219
N.S. 2,200,000.....	88
N.B. 1,400,000.....	56
N.E. 780,000.....	31
P.E. 260,000.....	10
Total.....	404

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Mr. Gray says we have ample security in the new Constitution, itself, and he compares our position to that of the States of the Union. Is little Rhode Island, he asked, afraid of being dealt with unjustly by the Government of the United States, &c., &c.

In the first place our condition is no wise resembles that of the United States. They are indeed the bundle of sticks so often talked of, which may be bound together; the Provinces, as Mr. Annand describes them, are but a few rods which do not lie side by side, but merely touch one another at the ends, or a few rods loosely strung as another says. Take the case of Ontario and in many days, I journey you can not tell when you leave one State or enter another, nor can you mark where the difference in the manner, habits, &c., of the people begins to be perceptible. It would be hard to make a general law which should be oppressive to Rhode Island and injurious to its trade, and not also affect, in the same manner and degree, many other States. The Southern States, we know, were made tributary to the New England States, and so it might be in this, amongst other grievances, by the attempt at revolution which the North, crushed in its South, is endeavouring to force on us to suppress.

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Common Pleas and brought on in some court, but the parties refused to accede to the proposition. The result of the ruling, therefore, of the Court of Common Pleas was, unless the Court of Chancery interfered, petitioners would have to fight a battle with the parties at great expense, although

