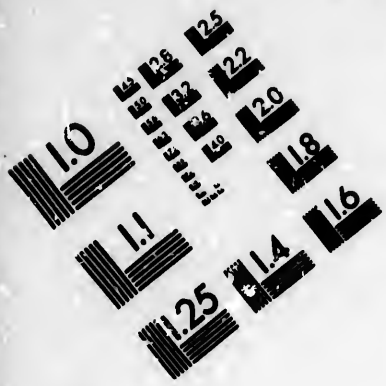

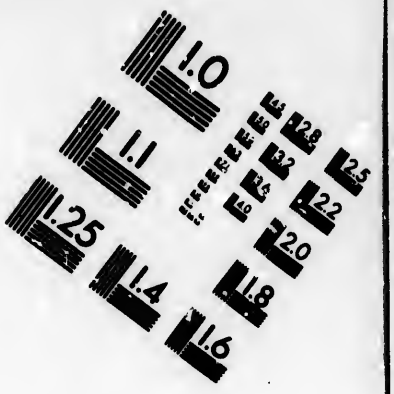

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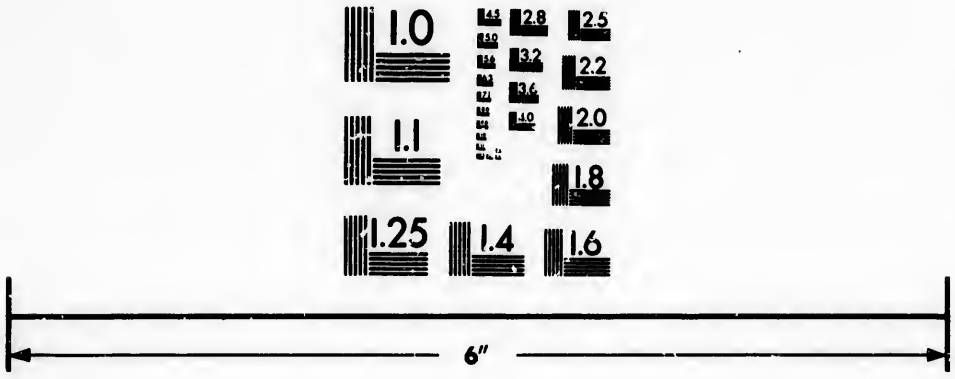

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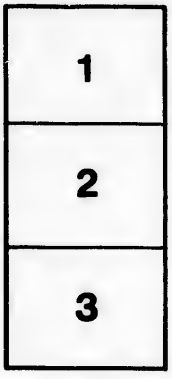

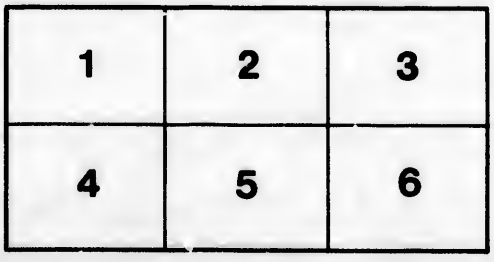

THE

CONFEDERATION OF

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

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CONFEDERATION OF

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

BY

E. C. BOLTON & H. H. WEBBER,

ROYAL ARTILLERY.

WITH MAPS.

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PREFACE.

THE remarks contained in this volume are offered to the public with some slight misgivings. The Canadian Confederation Scheme has been so widely discussed and so generally approved that any dissent from the principles therein laid down must have at least the charm of novelty. The experience of some years spent in British America may, perhaps, justify opposition to a measure which is, in our humble opinion, opposed to the interests of the Empire no less than to the interests of our American Colonists.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE are no people the details of whose affairs are so invariably uninteresting to the majority of Englishmen as British Colonists. A man may prose with impunity on Maoris or Red Indians, Kaffirs or Brahmins, but the moment he descants upon our fellow countrymen in distant lands Bore becomes his name.

On foreign countries a large margin of insipidity is allowable to both talkers and writers. If they be not talking something new, a chance is allowed that some stray hearer or reader may be ignorant of the subject exposed. It is not so, however, with the dweller amongst British Colonists. He can have nothing new to relate. He is supposed to have lived amongst Englishmen—amongst men whose tone of thought and

actions resemble the Briton of the old country. The Colonist thus becomes uninteresting to the mass of Englishmen. His country shares his fate. Every child knows the capital of most foreign nations and that of most English counties. Few know the principal cities of the different Australian colonies, or the capitals of the British North American Provinces. Canadian affairs have, it is true, attracted of late years a considerable amount of attention, but until quite recently the provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward's Island have been almost unknown in England. That Halifax, St. John, and Charlottetown being in British North America must be somewhere in Canada was, till lately, the belief of four out of five ordinarily educated Englishmen. Our maritime possessions in America are, exceptionally, little known. Whether a geographical position, which precludes their appearance on an ordinary map of the United States or Canada, has anything to do with the matter or not, it is difficult to say.

This obscurity of the Lower Provinces has produced an impression amongst us that, being little known, they must be poor, that not receiving so large a share of emigration as Canada they must remain in poverty until they enter into an union with that province. It

is true that the flow of emigrants passes westward of the Lower Provinces and affects but little the increase of their population; but, this being the case, the material prosperity of these countries becomes the more astonishing. Their poverty is a fallacy, although immigration would, doubtless, develop their resources. Their present wealth is remarkable, considering the small amount of home patronage in the shape of emigration which they have received.

The people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, without extraneous assistance, have developed and are quietly developing the resources of their respective provinces. Their population is steadily on the increase.

Their revenue increases in due proportion. The revenue of New Brunswick in 1850 was 104,089*l.*; in 1860 it had risen to 208,331*l.* That of Nova Scotia was 105,935*l.* in 1851; in 1864 it was 293,749*l.* The population of the latter province has increased more rapidly than that of several New England States, and is still steadily progressing. In 1851 the population of Nova Scotia was 276,000; in 1861 it was 330,857. New Brunswick contained in 1840, 154,000 souls; its present population is over 210,000.

A complete system of railways exists in Nova

Scotia: 220 miles are now in course of construction by the Government. The lines already in operation more than cover their working expenses and pay a small surplus into the provincial exchequer. The trade of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is extensive. Their ships are to be found in all parts of the globe. Considering the comparatively small population of these provinces, the amount of carrying trade which has fallen into their hands is prodigious. The Nova Scotian and New Brunswick fisheries are second in remunerativeness only to those of Newfoundland. The fish, with the exception of salmon, show no signs of failing. As grounds for emigration, many unsettled portions of these provinces are as tempting to the settler as the prairies of the West, with the additional advantage of being 2,000 miles nearer England. No richer land in the world is to be found than the lovely valleys of New Brunswick or the valley and marsh land of Nova Scotia. In mineral wealth these provinces have no rival in America. The coal measures of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are of untold value. Their worth is but beginning to be appreciated. The gold mines of Nova Scotia are rich; iron and copper also abound in many parts of the province. As a manufacturing country, when the resources of the

land are opened up, Nova Scotia must some day occupy a high place. The commercial interests of the Lower Colonists lie upon the ocean. Their principal customers are the West Indies, the United States, Spain, and Great Britain. They build ships, and sell them to all nations. They export timber, cattle, coal, fish, and gold. They import flour and grain from the United States, and woollen goods and manufactured cotton from England. With Canada they have little commerce.

Between the West Indies, England, and the United States their trade is principally divided. The taxation of the people is light, amounting to about half that of their cousin colonists the Canadians. The revenue is mostly expended on local works calculated to develop the resources of the country,—militia, education, and the interests of small debts contracted for the construction of railways. The people are loyal, prosperous, happy, and secure from invasion.

These Lower Provinces it is proposed to unite with Canada. To show that such a union, if not absolute folly, is useless, and a mere temporary measure, is our object. It will be shown that the material interests of the inhabitants of the Lower Colonies demand no such union. It will be shown that the people of

these provinces regard the measure with abhorrence. It will be shown that the Canadian people treat the project with indifference. It will be shown that the politicians of Canada and some of the politicians of the Lower Provinces are inclined to urge the measure with violence, and that the politicians of the various provinces do not express the feelings of the people they are supposed to represent. It will be proved that the projected union drew breath from the internal disagreements of Upper and Lower Canada. It will be shown that geography renders the scheme a farce, and, should it be consummated, an expensive farce to all concerned.

It will be proved that our North American colonies, taken collectively or singly, cannot be strengthened by confederation. It will be shown that the more money we guarantee to Canada the more she is in the position to demand. It will be shown that Imperial power will be weakened by making Ottawa the centre of thought and action for the Lower Provinces. Finally, we shall attempt to prove that the confederation of our North American Colonies cannot benefit Canada; cannot benefit the Lower Provinces; and is absolutely detrimental to the true interests of the Empire.

CHAPTER I.

EXISTING RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

THERE are many worthy colonists who fail to recognise the wisdom of expending their spare money upon fortifications, or their spare time in mastering the details of battalion drill, and who stoutly assert that the burden of colonial defence should be borne by the mother country alone. The chief argument brought forward in support of this comfortable doctrine lies in the question: Does not England keep her colonies for her own benefit rather than for the benefit of the colonists? This question, although readily answered regarding such colonies as Mauritius, Ceylon, Hong-Kong, and the Cape of Good Hope, or such important strongholds as Malta and Gibraltar, or such convenient coaling stations as Penang and Aden, becomes a question of extreme delicacy when applied to Canada.

Many Canadians are impressed with the idea that the loss of Canada would at once place England among the second-rate powers of the world;* whereas many Englishmen incline to the belief that, were Canada a foreign country, the taxation of England would be lighter, while its power for self-defence would be materially strengthened.

The geographical position of Canada renders it indefensible in the event of a war with the United States—unless, indeed, the Colonists themselves thought proper to rise as one man against those with whom they have hitherto lived upon terms of the closest intimacy. From any such struggle, however, the colonists, whether victorious or otherwise, would emerge hopelessly and irretrievably ruined—the victim, it might be, of a difference of opinion between the cabinets of Washington and Whitehall.†

It is, on the other hand, by no means likely that colonial wrong-doing would ever involve the mother country in a trans-Atlantic war; indeed, Canadians need fear no punishment for blunders committed by

* Mr. Isaac Buchanan, in a letter to the *Hamilton Spectator*, was good enough to say: "Canada is not only necessary to Britain as an empire, but even to its existence as a country as a first-class power."

† This remark does not apply to Nova Scotia, the geographical position of which renders it easy of defence.

their own statesmen, inasmuch as Americans now regard Canada in the light of a hostage for England's good behaviour towards themselves. The citizens of the United States are shrewd enough to perceive that neither British valour nor British gold can effectually protect four millions of colonists (scattered over four millions of square miles) against twenty millions of Americans, even supposing a certain proportion of the colonists willing to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for the sake of British connection.

Two questions naturally arise: (1) Is it worth the colonists' while to make such heavy sacrifices? (2) Is it England's policy to demand sacrifices which it is not for the interest of the colonists to concede? Both colonists and Englishmen will give a negative response to either question.

It cannot be denied that, since the introduction of responsible government, the ties which have bound British America to the mother country have been flimsy in the extreme, and utterly inadequate to withstand the most moderate pressure from without. For all practical purposes English opinion has had, for some years back, little or no weight with the colonists, the latter having been free to follow their own fancies in all things, whether such fancies were or were not in

accordance with English usage or English taste. The colonists profess intense loyalty, but their loyalty has never, as yet, been subjected to any very serious test. They have, since the introduction of responsible government, been accustomed to an easy and somewhat luxurious political existence. They frame their own laws, appoint their own judges, collect and expend their own revenues, tax British goods heavily, and resent as an impertinence any English criticism upon their political peculiarities. Without bearing any of the burdens of Englishmen they are yet imbued with a dim consciousness that England will ever be ready to throw her choicest treasures at their feet. Loyalty costs them nothing. Should misfortune overtake the mother country, the colonists need not fear extra taxation; but should England rejoice, British Americans rejoice likewise, organising processions, displaying bunting, and shouting "God save the Queen." In return for these somewhat unsubstantial benefits, England fortifies and garrisons the chief cities of Canada and the Lower Provinces, at a cost of something more than a million per annum.

By this arrangement the colonists are encouraged to live on from day to day, and from year to year, in an easy, hum-drum, apathetic manner,

neither gaining or caring to gain that self-reliant spirit, without which no people, however intelligent and industrious, can ever hope to become powerful or respected.

The truth is, British Americans, so long as they remain mere nominal subjects of the British Crown, must ever be seen to disadvantage. They compare unfavourably with their American neighbours in all, or nearly all, that has raised the citizens of the United States to their present proud position; they compare unfavourably with Englishmen in all, or nearly all, that has made the English nation feared and respected. Nor is this much to be wondered at, when we come to consider the very trying circumstances under which British Americans, as such, exist.

The North American colonies, unlike any other British colony, lie side by side with a nation whose rapid rise to greatness has no parallel in the history of the world. Rich in all nature's gifts, and peopled by a race energetic and enterprising in the highest possible degree, the great Western Republic offers a bright contrast to that larger portion of America which still remains under the nominal rule of Great Britain.

The Canadians can, by a mere expression of opinion, at almost any moment be annexed to the States, and there can be little doubt that the result of such annexation would, in the long run, prove highly favourable to Canadian interests. In dealing with the American colonists, England has to treat with men who are, as a rule, far more American than English; indeed in many important particulars the tone of the colonists is purely American and utterly un-English. Living in close proximity with the States, and numbering among their citizens many families of American descent, it is but natural that British Americans should in their every-day life exhibit some unmistakeable traits of Yankeedom. Their press, their railways, their hotels, their recreations and general mode of living, their ideas concerning the "rights of man," their dollar worship, their phraseology, and, above all, their ultra sensitiveness regarding foreign criticism, are more in accordance with American than English tastes. It is true, that as matters now stand, the bulk of the colonists in Lower Canada and the Maritime Provinces greatly prefer British to American rule; but were the Home authorities to recall the British troops, and say to the colonists: Garrison your own towns in time of peace, it is by no means impro-

bable that the partiality of our trans-Atlantic fellow-subjects for British connection would be considerably diminished. In the city of Halifax, for example, the money yearly expended by the army and navy, added to that expended upon fortifications, cannot be less than a quarter of a million, or about 9*l.* per head for every man, woman, and child within the confines of the city.

Withdraw the army and navy from Halifax, and the metropolis of Nova Scotia would speedily subside into a state of insignificance. If, however, we turn to the town of Yarmouth, situated on the western coast of Nova Scotia, and deriving no pecuniary benefit from England, we find a population virtually American, and, as such, prosperous and energetic. The same remark, slightly modified, holds good regarding the inhabitants of St. John, the chief city of New Brunswick; in fact, throughout the whole extent of the Lower Provinces the greatest material prosperity is found in those localities wherein the Yankee element preponderates most strongly. Such being the case, it is by no means strange that the colonists, taken *en masse*, should regard any prospect of a war with the United States as a calamity far greater than a rupture of those fragile ties which now link them to the policy of Great Britain.

It is surely time that both Englishmen and colonists should well consider their present unsatisfactory relations, and come to an understanding one way or the other. What Mr. ADDERLY termed the "rottenness" of Canada's connection with England must soon become apparent to all. In a letter to Mr. DISRAELI, published some few years back, Mr. ADDERLY justly remarked :—

"Canada and England cannot long remain together on terms of disadvantage to either. If you wish for permanent friendship with anybody, its terms must be fair and equal on both sides. Romantic patronage on one side, and interested attachment on the other, is not friendship, but mutual deception. When we find that we are paying too much for our pride, or that they are receiving too little for their dependence, the rottenness of our present connection will be detected." *

Admitting that "permanent friendship" is much to be desired, it is yet not easy to come to "terms" which, in the eyes of both contracting parties, shall be deemed "fair and equal." Mr. ADDERLY recommends the withdrawal of our troops from British America, on the plea that the presence of English

* "Colonial Relations:" C. B. Adderly, 1862.

soldiers furnishes the colonists with an excuse for not organising an effective local force. But, unless we greatly err, the withdrawal of British troops would tend rather to destroy than foster such martial ardour as the colonists may now be said to possess. The removal of the troops would be regarded by the colonists as a broad hint that England wished to be well rid of her American possessions, rather than as the repudiation of a bribe which the colonists of former days refused to accept.

The only "terms" whereon Great Britain can hope to treat with her North American possessions, must be terms the very reverse of "fair and equal." So long as Canada and the Maritime Provinces can do exactly as they please, enjoying the prestige attaching to subjects of the greatest empire of the world without paying sixpence towards that empire's support, so long may we expect fair speeches about the manifold advantages of British connection, and the ardent wish of the colonists to perpetuate English institutions in America for all time to come.

Viewed in a practical rather than a sentimental light, the present position of British Americans is enviable in the extreme. They can, politically speaking, afford to live without taking any thought for the

morrow, inasmuch as, under any circumstances, their morrow must take hopeful thought for the things of itself. They have, under responsible government, graciously allowed England the privilege of sending Lieutenant-Governors to their shores, on the well understood stipulation that such magnates should be regarded as the merest nonentities in all matters relating to the actual government of the several provinces. They have likewise condescended to accept from England about 1,200,000*l.* per annum, on condition that they should on all public occasions be allowed to claim as their own especial property the ships and regiments of Great Britain. But should an unhappy accident cause British statesmen to undervalue the privileges thus accorded the mother country, the colonists have the Great Western Republic to fall back upon, with the certainty that under the "Stars and Stripes" the natural resources of British America would be made the most of. Under these circumstances, it seems not improbable that the people of England may at no very distant period admit that they are "paying too much for their pride," and that England's present connection with Canada is "rotten" indeed.

British Americans, when arguing in favour of their

chief cities being garrisoned by English troops, occasionally differ among themselves. The inhabitants of Halifax, for example, openly scout the idea of their city being held by Great Britain merely as an Imperial stronghold. Canadians, on the other hand, accuse the mother country of parsimony, because every Canadian city is not deemed as important as Malta or Gibraltar. Such at least would seem to be the opinion of a leading Canadian journal, as expressed in the following words:—"It must be recollected that, *in proposing* to drill our militia and pay part of the cost of our own defences, we are going further than ever colonists went before.* When we think of the millions which Britain spent on Malta, Gibraltar, Aden, and every other barren rock on which she has planted her flag, we wonder at the parsimony which offers two hundred thousand pounds to save her British North American possessions from a rival and possible foe."

This paragraph shows plainly enough the erroneous views entertained by many colonists respecting the

* The Canadian writer was doubtless unaware of the fact, that the Governments of Australia, Ceylon, Mauritius, &c., provide liberally for the support of the troops within their borders. Jamaica, too, used formerly to provide rations and barracks for the troops quartered there.

importance of Canada for purposes of Imperial policy. Indeed our trans-Atlantic brethren seem either unable or unwilling to grasp the fact that the nominal retention of Canada weakens rather than strengthens the empire at large.

Englishmen are naturally anxious to keep this doctrine as much as possible in the background; but the time must soon come when none but the plainest speaking upon this subject will suit the temper of the British public.*

It may be urged, however, that Canada is valuable to the empire as a healthy station for a portion of our army, and that on this account its retention is desirable at all hazards. This argument would be weighty indeed, were it proposed that *all* our colonies should adopt the principle of self-defence,—a proposition manifestly absurd; so long as we retain certain stations for military purposes alone. There is a vast difference between such colonies as Canada and New Brunswick and such purely military stations as Malta and Gibraltar; the possession of the latter stations

* The *Times*, indeed, in the spring of 1865, spoke out plainly enough:—"When the public hear of Canadian defences, they experience nothing but a feeling of uneasiness and perplexity. They also know and reflect with a feeling of *mingled pride and embarrassment*, that the people of those British American Provinces are anxious to maintain their connexion with the mother country."

enabling England to inflict grievous damage upon her enemies in the event of an European war,—whereas the possession of the former colonies renders England liable to humiliation in case of a war with the States.

The English force now scattered throughout British North America, over an area larger than that of all Europe, might, if concentrated nearer home, decide a nicely-balanced engagement, upon the issue of which depended the tranquillity of Europe. But, supposing England and America at war, what could 10,000 or 15,000 British troops do against such an overwhelming force as the States could pour into Canada? Colonel JERVOISE's Report furnishes the best answer to this question: they could do comparatively nothing. A British force which a few years since might have routed a horde of men undisciplined, undrilled, and for all practical purposes unofficered,—could now, at best, but perish gallantly, outnumbered tenfold. At the commencement of hostilities between the Northern and Southern States, America had no claim to be regarded as a power possessed of military strength. However rich the States may have been in the various essentials necessary for carrying on a protracted war, the resources at their command could

at best be regarded only as so much raw material. They were rich in men and money, and descendants of a race not used to turn away from a foe; but beyond this, they were far from formidable. Their first armies were badly handled, and almost totally undisciplined; and had the *Trent* affair resulted in hostilities with England, we should have had but little reason to despair of success. But how different is the case now! Four years campaigning fashioned the raw material into an army, not, it is true, so highly disciplined as the armies of Europe, but yet fit for immediate duty, and well inured to the rough vicissitudes of active service. And the several campaigns not only fashioned soldiers, but likewise produced men capable of handling them to advantage. Indeed, should the American Government again proclaim war, it can command the services of strategists competent to plan and direct a campaign, and of tacticians able to take advantage of any position wherein strategy might place them. Under these circumstances, it is hardly probable that the English people will much longer rest content with relations so peculiar, so false, and so unsatisfactory, as those now existing between England and Canada. As matters now stand, our troops are incapable of suc-

cessfully defending the territory they are exiled to defend; but were such troops recalled, the people of British America would in the course of a few months clamour for annexation to the States. It is not easy to perceive any special value in colonies retained upon such terms as these. It is one thing to pay taxes for the gratification of national pride, but it is another thing to be taxed merely for the chance of national humiliation.

There are those who would fain try to persuade themselves that the several provinces of British North America should be regarded as so many English counties, having a claim upon the empire as strong as that of Cornwall or Devon.

This theory is regarded with especial favour by the colonists themselves, who seem to forget that their position is, virtually, as distinct from that of Cornishmen or Devonians as is the Government of Nova Scotia from the Government of Great Britain. When the colonists clamoured for and obtained political independence, they cast off all just claims upon the protection of the mother country—at least until such time as they should find themselves involved by Imperial policy in the chances of a foreign war.

It seems absurd that the inhabitants of Cornwall

or Devon should be taxed for the protection of those who legislate without any regard whatever for Imperial interests; nay more, who refuse to British manufacturers the privileges accorded citizens of the United States. But the colonists not unfrequently assert their right of exemption from the burdens imposed upon Englishmen, on the ground that they are not represented in the Imperial Parliament. No sane man, having any knowledge of colonial life, can for a moment imagine that Canadians would consent to be represented in the English Parliament with reference to their importance as British subjects, whether as regards wealth or population.

The population of Canada is less than that of London, and the revenue of all British North America is little more than three millions per annum.

Seeing, therefore, that any attempt to propitiate the colonists by giving them a voice in matters of Imperial concern must of necessity fail, it remains to be considered upon what terms England can hope to retain the whole of her North American possessions.

The possibility of Canadian neutrality, in the event of the United States being involved in a foreign war, has already been suggested by a Committee of the New York Chamber of Commerce, in the following

words:—"It may be intimated in an entirely kindly spirit, that if the Confederation about to be established to the north of us could obtain from the Imperial Government a guarantee that it might preserve a strict neutrality on the breaking out of all future foreign wars in which it has no interest, it might count on perpetual peace and tranquillity, and uninterrupted commercial relations with the United States." It is not easy to understand the inhabitants of the several provinces taking a very deep interest in any war wherein England was not engaged; and it is hardly probable that in case of a war between England and the United States, the Government of the latter country would regard Canada as a "neutral," so long as her chief cities were garrisoned with English troops. A "strict neutrality" on the part of Canada, means the withdrawal of British troops; and the withdrawal of the troops would probably be followed by a hearty desire for annexation.

Independence is never even dreamed of by those whose affections oscillate between England and the States, according to circumstances.

Prior to the Southern rebellion, America was the favourite; but the expenses incurred by the latter in putting down the rebellion inclined the Canadian

mind back to that "loyalty" of which we have all heard so much. When the United States recover the cost of the war, it is more than probable that annexation feelings will again get the upper hand, and that England will admit that she has been "paying too much for her pride." The maxims which have hitherto guided Canadian statesmen in their dealings with Great Britain may be briefly summed up in a single sentence. Promise all that is demanded, but give as little as possible. This view was so plainly discussed in the London *Spectator* that no apology is necessary for making therefrom a somewhat lengthy extract.

"Is it possible the assertion of those who distrust the colonies is true, and that the colonists are perfectly willing to belong to Great Britain as long as Great Britain will protect them, but not willing if they are to be asked to help in protecting themselves?* In

* That eccentric mountebank, George Francis Train, thus alluded to the Canadians in a speech delivered before the Fenian Congress at Philadelphia :—"God has blasted the energies of that people. So long as they can draw money out of England they will keep on sucking. The greatest swindle of any was the twenty millions sterling robbed from England in building the Grand Trunk Railway. The capital is sunk, the road wants repairing, the rails are worn out, the rolling stock used up, and the receipts not enough to pay ordinary expenses." Mr. Train's remarks, albeit more forcible than polite, are not without a germ of truth—as all who have travelled in Canada must admit.

that case, the sooner they come to a distinct understanding as to the worth of the alliance the better for them and for the world, for without it they will most indubitably find themselves some day left in the lurch. Great Britain is perfectly willing to fight for the Canadians as if they were residents of Cornwall, but then they must exert themselves as the people of Cornwall would, pay taxes as high, submit, if the matter comes to a struggle of life and death, to a conscription, or as we call it, a 'ballot militia law,' as severe as would be enforced in any English county. If they are not prepared for this, they had better go at once; for exactly in proportion as their zeal slackens, so will that of this country. Or is it that the colonies are simply trying to play the old game, and endeavouring to extort better terms from this country by threats of secession if their terms are refused? If they are, they are guilty of a political anachronism fatal to the reputation of their leaders for practical statesmanship. It is the deliberate opinion of the best political thinkers and the most influential cabinet ministers in this country that the time has arrived when the dependence of the Anglo-Saxon colonies must either cease, or merge in an alliance to be arranged by clear and carefully observed diplomatic

agreements. Upon the whole, and with one or two reserves, they prefer the latter course;—so much prefer it, that they are willing to undergo the risk of war, and the certainty of very considerable expenses for defence, rather than adopt the safe, but, as they consider, dishonourable expedient of cutting the colonies loose. But the preference is dependent entirely upon the readiness of the colonies to do all in their power to maintain the connection, and any threat of departure will be received with a serene 'God speed you,' not, it may be, wholly unmixed with pleasure.* * We have earned the right to be heard by these American colonists, and we tell them distinctly that any pretension to dictate terms to the mother country is, in the present state of opinion, simply preposterous; that they have before them two alternatives, to form themselves into a nation in strict alliance with Great Britain, but with separate armaments, taxation, and expenditure; or to go free whither their energy or their destiny may lead them. They are free to choose either course, as free as the British Parliament, and for this once the mother country will abide by their choice: but there are no more alternatives than these. They may construe Mr. CARDWELL's despatches as they like, or draw what conclusions they please from

debates in Parliament, but that, so far as we have any capacity to understand it, is the determination of the nation. Months ago one of the most intelligent of Canadians replied to some searching questions on the subject, much in this fashion:—'We prefer Great Britain to the United States; if you will fight for us, we are willing to fight; but it is not worth our while to fight as the South has done: we should not be extinguished by annexation, and the stake is not great enough.' If that express the heart of the colonists, and all this news looks like it, there is an end of the matter."*

It were absurd to blame the Canadians for not being wrapped up, so to speak, in England's fortunes for better or for worse; as well blame them for not having been born in England and educated amid

* *Spectator*, 15th April, 1865. The sentiment entertained by "one of the most intelligent of Canadians," that "it is not worth our while to fight as the South has done," finds no favour whatever with the people of Nova Scotia, who are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the death for British connexion. A very few, scattered throughout the country districts, may be lukewarm in the cause of England, but they dare not openly avow sentiments so entirely opposed to those entertained by the great mass of their countrymen. When, therefore, the *Spectator* writer asserts that it is "the determination of the nation" to compel those who are prepared to fight to make common cause with those who do not consider it "worth their while" to fight, he propounds a doctrine utterly hateful to the people of the Lower Provinces, and fully justifies the latter for rejecting the Confederation scheme.

associations purely British. The Canadian "lumberer" may well be excused for not troubling his head much about the British Constitution, and the Montreal shopkeeper is too busy serving his Yankee customers to devote any considerable portion of his time to the study of English traditions. It is impossible for a Canadian to fully comprehend that loyalty which every Englishman *feels*, and it is perhaps on this account that the term "loyalty" is but rarely used in England, whereas in Canada it is in almost everybody's mouth. The birthday of the reigning Sovereign receives far more attention in the colonies than in England, indeed on every possible occasion the colonists deem it necessary to make a parade of their loyalty lest its existence should be altogether forgotten.

That inborn, deep-seated *sentiment* of loyalty which no external circumstances can in the slightest degree affect, which grows with the growth of the nation, and is part and parcel of every Englishman's heritage, has no existence, and can have no existence, in a country nine-tenths of whose inhabitants have never set foot in England.* Place any five ordinary Eng-

* "There is one sort of patriotic attachment which principally arises from that instructive, disinterested, and undefinable feeling

lish bagmen in the commercial room of a provincial hotel, and the chances are that, in the course of half an hour, two out of the five will assert that England is the worst governed country in the world, that the nation is on the verge of ruin, and that the Constitution is in danger of being shaken to its very foundation. But let any one hint at the possibility of Windsor Castle being turned into a barrack for the accommodation of French soldiers, or of High Mass being celebrated by a foreign prelate in Westminster Abbey, and the bagmen are united as one man, each being ready to sacrifice life and fortune for the Constitution so recently condemned.

But it is not so in Canada, where, the Queen's birthday festivities concluded, and the gay flags and banners safely stowed away, Canadians calmly and amicably discuss the advantages or disadvantages of annexation to a foreign Power.

When men in both Houses of the Imperial Parliament talk of Canadian loyalty, they would surely do

which connects the affections of man with his birthplace. This natural fondness is united to a taste for ancient customs, and to a reverence for ancestral traditions of the past; those who cherish it love their country as they love the mansion of their fathers. This patriotism is in itself a kind of religion: it does not reason, but it acts from the impulse of faith and sentiment."—De Tocqueville, "Democracy in America," vol. ii., p. 121.

well to reflect that loyalty in its true sense—loyalty as they themselves understand the term—cannot be preserved through two or three generations nursed and cherished upon trans-Atlantic soil. Canada is not, like England, crowded with objects which illustrate the history of the nation and recall the deeds of those who in the field or in the senate battled for the liberties we now enjoy. That love of England, as *old* England, with all its varied associations of feudalism, monasticism, civil war, and revolution, cannot exist among a people whose "most intelligent" representatives declare that British connection is not worth fighting about.

It remains to be seen whether the House of Commons will continue to lavish money upon a country, the retention of which weakens the Empire, and the people of which are divided among themselves as to the merits of British or American rule. The more we extend the frontier of our North American possessions, the weaker becomes our power in the West, and the more men and money we pour into Canada, the longer we retard the real (but as yet only partially expressed) interests of the Canadians themselves.

CHAPTER II.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

Before treating of the Quebec Confederation Scheme, about which so much has been written during the last twelve months, it is absolutely necessary to note the working of Responsible Government in the Lower Provinces. In so doing we shall confine our remarks solely to the province of Nova Scotia, the most loyal and by far the most English portion of British America.

The Constitution of Nova Scotia is copied from that of Great Britain, the Crown being represented by a Lieutenant-Governor, the House of Lords by a Legislative Council, and the Commons by a House of Assembly. In opening the Parliamentary Session certain formalities, as imposing as the province can command, are religiously observed. A Guard of Honour is drawn up without the Parliament House, Volunteers line the staircase, a band plays "God save

the Queen," the representative of Royalty sits beneath a canopy, the people's representatives are summoned to the bar, there is a speech from the throne, and a peal of ordnance from a saluting battery. This pageant over, all resemblance to Imperial proceedings vanishes until the following Session.

The first interest of England is assuredly the honour of her public men,* a consideration utterly ignored in the American colonies. During the first few years of responsible government, the highest offices were filled by men whose position, social and intellectual, pointed them out as the legitimate rulers of the people; but the lowered tone of public life during the last few years has driven the upper portion of society from politics, as from something contaminating and offensive. A seat in the House of Assembly is no longer coveted by those highest in the social scale, and the taint which has fallen upon public life is gradually, but surely, poisoning the whole atmosphere of colonial society. It is not too much to assert that politics are the curse of the

* The effect produced throughout America by the resignation of the late Lord Chancellor cannot be overrated. The fiercest democrats were obliged to admit the dignity of a Constitution which will not suffer even the breath of suspicion to attach to men high in office.

American colonies; indeed, the earliest friends of Responsible Government are by this time thoroughly disgusted with its working, and willing to admit that their well-meant effort to transplant the British form of Government to American soil has proved a dismal failure. Public men have weight simply because they have votes, and it would be nothing short of an insult to the colonists to suppose them fairly represented by their politicians. The local Governments are amateur institutions*—mere playthings, called into life for the pecuniary benefit of a certain class of men at the expense of their neighbours. No Parliament could exist in England unless its members represented the wealth, the intelligence, the rank, and the honour of millions. In the colonies "honourable" members work for four dollars a day while the House is sitting, and in Nova Scotia even members of the Legislative Council (*i.e.*, the "Upper House") now condescend to work for similar wages—a seat in the Council being a life investment of about 1700*l.* at 6 per cent. It is indeed not easy to understand why a Legislative Councillor should prefix the word "Honourable" to

* Were England to cast the colonies adrift, the local Governments would collapse, not having at their disposal the means for enforcing their enactments.

his name, seeing that he receives every year 16*s.* a day for about a 100 days' enjoyment. There can be little doubt that were this democratic principle abolished, a better class of men would take an active part in politics, but so long as a seat in the Assembly is equivalent to so much bread and salt, so long will the Senate be replenished by men to whom mere bread and salt is a very great object. What DE TOCQUEVILLE said regarding America, may too truthfully be applied to some of the country districts of Nova Scotia:—"It very frequently happens that a man does not undertake to direct the fortune of the State until he has discovered his incompetence to conduct his own affairs."*

It is, therefore, not strange that the leaders of political parties should, in order to ensure support, be compelled to stoop to acts at once tyrannical and contemptible. This is especially the case regarding tenure of office, a change of Government often affecting hundreds of persons employed in the humblest capacities. Colonial politicians place no limit on retaliation, and are moreover prone to clutch at bad precedents in order to excuse tyrannical measures.

* "Democracy in America," vol. ii., p. 63.

In a blue book, entitled "Tenure of Office,"* there is a curious account of a squabble between Lord NORMANBY (then Lord MULGRAVE) and his Executive Council, in the course of which the most dire revelations are brought to light concerning a Government that—"Spared neither age, sex, nor condition; whenever and wherever an office was wanted to reward, it was wrested from its occupants without an hour's notice, or the slightest explanation." Bad as all this reads, the Executive jumped at it triumphantly as a precedent for their own misdeeds:—"The principle of removing prominent departmental officers upon a change of Government was thus established by the clearest precedent."† The Nova Scotian executive (of which Dr. CHARLES TUPPER, the present premier, was the head) had, it would seem, peculiar views regarding the expression "prominent departmental officers," inasmuch as at about the same time appeared in the *Royal Gazette* the following interesting announcement:—"To be Postmistress at River Philip—Mrs. J. C. Phillips, vice Miss Hewson, by whom she was superseded in 1861."

The wisdom of the premier can readily be de-

* Nova Scotia, 1864. † *Ibia.*

tected in this appointment: *gagnez les femmes* is a wise maxim, and there can be little doubt that had Miss Hewson been allowed to continue issuing postage stamps for any lengthened period, there would have been a serious outbreak at River Philip and the "great Conservative party" (as the colonists term it) would probably have been annihilated.

Viewed in a pecuniary light, such appointments as that vacated by Miss Hewson are perhaps of trifling importance, but viewed in accordance with the wishes of a Colonial Government such appointments become *bonâ fide* political offices. Mrs. Phillips, no less than the premier (Dr. TUPPER), accepted political employment, and was, of course, ready to stand or fall with that "great Conservative party," for whose humiliation she was superseded in 1861.

This system of constantly changing men (and women) just as they begin to understand their business has its disadvantages, especially when applied to pointsmen and others employed upon railroads—indeed it is deemed hardly safe to travel by rail during the first few months of a new Administration. In some instances ejection from public employ is effected in a manner the reverse of dignified, and by

a form of procedure hardly in accordance with that love of fair play popularly ascribed to the Anglo-Saxon race. A single illustration will suffice. In the month of May, 1864, a lighthouse-keeper, named HENRY B. LOWDEN, received an official letter informing him that he was dismissed from his post, and in the course of a few weeks his successor was appointed. Mr. LOWDEN's crime, as set forth by the responsible advisers of the Queen's deputy, consisted in having voted against the party then in power, at a general election in 1859. In support of this charge was produced a poll-book, wherein was written HENRY LOWDEN. But, as it turned out, HENRY B. LOWDEN, the lighthouse-keeper, had not voted at all in 1859, and it was then deemed advisable to eject him for having made the matter public "in a manner calculated to reflect injuriously" * upon the ministry. The unfortunate lighthouse-keeper was, it must be admitted, placed in a position somewhat trying. He must either have lost his place through an "error" of the premier's, or he must have invested the "error" with something which reflected credit upon the ministry. It is almost needless to say he was dis-

* Published correspondence of Dr. Tupper, Premier of Nova Scotia.

missed, albeit he had been in charge of the lighthouse for a quarter of a century, and had been trained to the business by his father, who had charge of the lighthouse before him.*

* That this system of wholesale dismissal from public employ upon a change of Government was long since deprecated is manifest from Earl Grey's remarks concerning "Responsible Government:" "In the United States it is well known to be the practice to treat the holders of office, from the highest to the lowest, as having no vested interest whatever in their employments, and as being always liable to dismissal at a moment's notice, at the pleasure of the party in power. The proverbial ingratitude of Republics to those who serve them has been manifested in these States in the strongest manner, and little or no consideration has been shown for the interests of even the most distinguished of their citizens who have devoted themselves to the public service. In this country, on the other hand, although, with very few exceptions, all offices in the public service are held legally and technically at the pleasure of the Crown, yet the rule that only the holders of what are called political offices are to be removed without compensation for any other cause than misconduct or inefficiency, has been so completely established by public opinion, that there is scarcely an instance of its being departed from. The adoption of a similar rule in Nova Scotia was recommended in a despatch to Sir John Harvey, of which the following is an extract. After describing the practice in this country, I proceeded to observe:—'Though it is not without some inconvenience, I regard this system as possessing, upon the whole, very great advantages. We owe to it, that the public servants of this country, as a body, are remarkable for their experience and knowledge of public affairs, and honourably distinguished by the zeal and integrity with which they discharge their duties, without reference to party feeling. We owe to it, also, that as the transfer of political power from one party in the State to another is followed by no change of the holders of any but a few of the highest offices, political animosities are not in general carried to the same height, and do not so deeply agitate the whole frame of society, as in those countries where a different practice prevails. The system, with regard to the tenure of office, which has been found to work so

To those unacquainted with colonial political life this case is instructive, as setting forth the stamp of men elected in our colonies to govern their fellows. It is the boast of our country that the humblest individuals are protected in their respective callings in a manner calculated to inspire confidence in the governing classes. In the colonies it is unfortunately the very reverse; indeed it may be questioned whether the Czar of Russia exercises over his subjects a sway more despotic than does a colonial prime minister over his fellow colonists.

If the despotism of an archangel be the most perfect state of government conceivable to the human mind, and the despotism of a truly great and good man be the nearest approach to this,—what can be said of the despotism of men capable of acting as the premier of Nova Scotia acted in the case just cited? Is it strange that colonial politicians should not possess the confidence of the colonists, or fairly represent their

well here, seems to be worthy of imitation in the British American Colonies; and the small population and limited revenue of Nova Scotia, as well as the general occupation and social state of the community, are, in my opinion, additional reasons for abstaining, so far as regards that province, from going further than can be avoided without giving up the principle of executive responsibility, in making the tenure of office in the public service dependent upon the result of party contests.'"—"Colonial Policy of Lord J. Russell," pp. 275, 276, 277.

countrymen upon matters of real importance? On the contrary, would it not be strange indeed to find them backed up by men justly entitled to respect? The utter failure of all the congresses, conventions, delegations, &c., that have from time to time occupied the public men of British America, may be accounted for by this one fact: *the men of real weight take little or no interest in politics*, and consequently *the public men do not represent the weight of public opinion.*

Much of the disinclination of the upper classes for public life may be attributed to the low tone of the press; no abuse being considered too vile, or no personality too unseemly for political warfare. In accepting office a man must be prepared to see all the minor details of his private life commented upon in print.* Almost every politician of note has under his control a newspaper, in the columns of which he airs his opinions concerning the chiefs of the opposing party. One or two extracts from the leading journal of Nova Scotia will show the high estimate whereat colonial patriots rate one another, and will also give some

* Even the Queen's Representative is not sacred from such indecent attacks. During the latter portion of Sir R. G. MacDonnell's stay in Nova Scotia he was, week after week, gratuitously insulted in the columns of a disreputable newspaper by an unworthy member of the so-called "Upper House."

notion of their peculiar school of literature. The following piece of pleasantry is aimed at the premier of Nova Scotia by a gentleman whose political position in his native country corresponds with that of Lord DERBY in England:—

"The Provincial Secretary, it seems, is rarely to be found in his office; and no wonder. What with his private practice, that nets him his round thousand a-year—his duties as medical officer to the corporation requiring his attention at the hospital, and taking an occasional snuff at the mouths of filthy sewers, backyards, slums and slaughter-houses, to look after the sanitary condition of the city—his governorship of Dalhousie College—an occasional delegation—the discharge of the extensive and self-imposed duties as a member of the 'Council of Education,' not to speak of his relations or interest in the printing establishment with Mr. Grant, and the preparations of prosy, truth-element-lacking editorials for the *Colonist*—the man, perhaps, ought not to be judged too harshly. Then there is the Attorney-General residing at his country seat; horse-races and other public sports making large demands upon his time. When in Opposition, and could put Queen's Counsel fees to the extent of from $300 to $500 a-year in his pocket, he

could find time to travel the Cape Breton Circuit; but *now*, with his Attorney-Generalship, worth $2,000 per annum, unretrenched, with the fees—perhaps about as much more—he can hardly be expected to look very carefully after the public business; and if he did, we are not quite sure that, unless pointed out to him with a walking-stick, he would discover the blundering." *

The next extract, also aimed at the premier, was considered exceedingly "smart."

Some one is supposed to be talking with the Provincial Secretary about the leader of the Opposition, —"Why, you said, Detach him from his colleagues. Bedaub them with mock praise—not that ex — but commend them occasionally. Represent them as honourable opponents . . . and all that kind of thing, and then let fly a poisoned dagger at *him*. You said you had replenished your poison bag, you know, from a distillation of rotten hams, essence of sewers, gutters, drains, and slaughter-houses, with a tincture of the virus of small-pox. You guaranteed that an arrow dipped in this infernal compound was as deadly as the bite of the aspic would be fatal wherever it pierced. Now, I have shot a hundred of

* *Halifax Morning Chronicle.*

such full at *him*, and he only laughs at them. As regards his colleagues, any attempt to conciliate them by flattery, that, too, is all lost labour."*

Such is the manner of carrying on political warfare in a country which, to borrow the language of the *Times*, "wants no politics and no politicians, but requires the brain and the arm of every man in it to fell its forests, plough its lands, dig its mines, and irrigate its fields."

This low tone of public life is unfortunately not confined to politicians only, but extends to those who should be foremost in setting an example of purity and rectitude.† In 1863, there appeared in one of the Halifax papers a series of letters accusing no less a person than the High Sheriff of certain malpractices

* *Halifax Morning Chronicle.* The colonial papers are not over-nice in notices one of another. The following passage, taken from the *Halifax Reporter*, is as good in its way as anything ever published in the *Eatanswill Gazette*:—"Let this libeller of the honoured medical fraternity of Halifax—this filthy excrescence on our journalism—this pauper sheet, unable to maintain any but a precarious existence—this setting luminary, which has been quoted all over the American Union in order to throw discredit on the fair fame of our city—we say, let the half-starved creature who sits in the editorial chair of the *ragling*, while the chief pauper is abroad hat in hand, contradict the above falsehood, else the writer of it will unmolested enjoy his well-earned reputation: that of a gross and unmitigated slanderer."

† In the country districts of Nova Scotia salmon-poaching is not merely connived at, but largely practised by the magistrates.

in the discharge of his official duties. The charges thus publicly brought forward included extortion of money from debtors, auctioneers, &c.

No notice whatever was taken of the matter, the judges re-electing the sheriff without a word, and society in general agreeing to hush the matter up. The only conclusion to be arrived at is, that petty extortion by a man high in office is thought nothing of in the colonies. The greatest evil, however, which Responsible Government has nursed into life is a wide-spread and constantly increasing want of confidence in the administration of the law. It is a notorious fact that no man having any political influence need ever fear conviction by a jury for any crime whatever; indeed there are some who scruple not to affirm that politics sometimes find their way to the Bench. That such scandalous assertions are unfounded we have every reason to believe; still, the mere fact of such rumours getting abroad speaks badly for the working of Responsible Government. It must be remembered that in colonial Parliaments the preponderance of lawyers is very great, the leader of the Government party being, in nine Parliaments out of ten, the Attorney-General of the Province. When, therefore, an Attorney-General is elevated to

the Bench, he has to decide cases argued for and against by those who have through long years of political warfare been his warmest friends or his fiercest foes. The judge, it is true, has now nothing to gain or lose from party conflict; but he must be something more than mortal to set aside, it may be in a week, all the animosities and prejudices engendered by years of a parliamentary warfare which, according to the "Blue Book" already quoted, "spares neither age, sex, or condition."

The general administration of the law is lax and unsatisfactory. Infanticide is common, but little or no trouble is taken to check it. A paragraph, or it may be a single line, appears in the local papers, stating that the mangled body of an infant has been discovered somewhere: there the matter ends, nobody seeming to care whether the murderess has or has not been discovered.* Incendiarism is carried on in Halifax to an extent unknown in European cities,

* In November, 1865, a box containing the remains of a dead body was found in one of the bonded warehouses. "This unwelcome package," says the *Halifax Reporter*, 21st of November, "was directed to a druggist in Halifax, who, knowing nothing relative to it, would have nothing to do with the parcel. Time wore on. At length, among others, the package was opened by the officers of customs, when it was found to contain a skeleton. The flesh was all but wasted away from the bones." The public never heard anything more of this matter.

but the incendiary is rarely, if ever, detected.* Even homicide too frequently remains unpunished. In the month of October, 1864, half a dozen young men got into a brawl in one of the public streets of Halifax. Two of them had an especial grapple, during which a third came near them. In a few moments one of the combatants arose, staggered across the street, fell down, and in a few minutes died from a wound in the throat. The man with whom he had been grappling was seized by a policeman, the other brawlers being left to concoct any story they pleased. The accused party was found not guilty, but if he did not stab the deceased, and the deceased did not stab himself, somebody else stabbed him, and that somebody was one of the gang. But the person first charged did not do it, and—there was an end of the matter! These facts, condensed from a Halifax newspaper, show how the law is carried out in our American colonies.

Not the least among the many evils of Responsible Government in a small community, is the concentration of power in the hands of one man—the premier.

* A barn, belonging to a Halifax Alderman, was set on fire three times in about as many months. A man and several horses were destroyed, but the culprit, or culprits, remained undetected.

The Provincial Secretary of a colony such as Nova Scotia does literally as he pleases. Not content with attending to the affairs of his own immediate department, he carries his patronage into every department of the public service, even to the appointment of post-office clerks, collectors of colonial duties, commissioners of schools, chairmen of boards, lighthouse-keepers, supervisors of roads, and gaugers. The result of such interference upon the public service may readily be imagined. The position of the Lieutenant-Governor is most trying. Surrounded by responsible advisers, with whom he can have scarce any feeling in common, he must either sanction acts which he knows to be unjust, or set himself in opposition to his ministry.

Every act of the Colonial Government, writes Earl GREY, "is done in the name and by the authority of the Sovereign; hence the honour of the Crown, which it is of the highest importance to the whole empire to maintain unimpaired, must be compromised by any injustice or violation of good faith, which it has the power to prevent, being committed by the local authorities. It is, therefore, the duty of those by whom the Imperial Government is conducted, and to whom, as the responsible servants

of the Crown, its honour is entrusted, to take care that this honour does not suffer by the Sovereign's being made a party to proceedings involving a departure from the most scrupulous justice and good faith towards individuals, or towards particular classes of the inhabitants of any of our colonies."*

It may be doubted how far the system of dismissing lighthouse-keepers and postmistresses upon a change of Government accords with "the honour of the Crown."

Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell, shortly after his arrival in Nova Scotia, seemed most anxious to put an end to the petty tyranny of his ministers. In one of his earliest speeches occur the following remarks:—"Even here, under the shadow of the British Crown, whose home civil service is the admiration of other countries for the patient ability and high integrity of its officers, which are secured by regulations and practice that promote mutual confidence, the special advantages which a Government can give as compared with private employment, namely, more honourable service and a more fixed tenure of office—has been jeopardized. If no

* "Colonial Policy," vol. i., pp. 24, 25.

man can, by any length of service, or by any amount of devotion to the public, feel assured that he will be left unmolested in the discharge of his duty, how many competent servants do you suppose the trivial pay which is here given will secure? Believe me, that ere long those who may remain in your service, if competent, will probably be corrupt, or at least will selfishly use you as a mere convenience. There may be other questions, grave and important . . . but they are as nothing compared with the importance of dealing with this growing evil—this social canker."*

The soundness of these views cannot be questioned; but, unfortunately, for the public service, Sir R. G. MacDonnell did not afterwards fully act up to the tenor of his remarks, and the dismissal system was carried on as before. Had he boldly asserted the Crown's prerogative and refused to sanction the petty acts of his premier, he might have crushed out the "growing evil" with the full concurrence of the Imperial authorities. Nova Scotian ministers once in office are seldom driven to the hustings by any temperate exercise of the power of the Crown; on the

* Speech delivered at Pictou, N. S., by His Excellency Sir R. G. MacDonnell.

contrary, they generally try to uphold their dignity by annoying the Lieutenant-Governor to the utmost of their ability.* A Lieutenant-Governor has not, like the QUEEN, an hereditary interest in the welfare of the State whereof he is the head. He is surrounded by men having no higher claims to consideration than those attaching to party leadership in a country which needs neither politics nor parties. To him is assigned the unenviable post of mediator between men fighting for such loaves and fishes as party triumph can command; between men writing one of another in a style foreign to English ears; between men who, if guilty of the crimes daily laid to their charge, are unworthy of any confidence whatever.

Surrounded by such men, the Lieutenant-Governor must yet maintain a grave demeanour, looking on at the nonsensical burlesque as though he were in the presence of Her Majesty's Privy Council. To do this gracefully is a task by no means easy.

It is the misfortune of Colonial Parliaments to be divided into two parties only, each pledged to oppose

* The first act of the existing Nova Scotian ministry, was to withdraw a salary of £250 from Lord Normanby's private secretary. That this was done to insult Lord Normanby there can be no reasonable doubt, inasmuch as, upon the arrival of his successor, the salary was again allowed. Such acts speak volumes concerning the "statesmen" produced by Responsible Government.

the other on all possible occasions without any reference to the interests of the country. Any scheme for promoting immigration, or otherwise advancing the real interests of Nova Scotia, would be opposed on economical grounds—at least until such time as the most prominent opposers obtained power, in which case the latter would probably advocate the measure whereon they had ousted their opponents from office. When a really good measure is brought forward, it is almost invariably defeated, lest the governing party should have any capital to trade upon at the next general election.

Were it possible to organise in each of the provinces a party of independent politicians, the benefit to British America would be immense; but, unfortunately, there does not exist in the American colonies a class of men willing to serve their country from motives purely disinterested, or, in other words, willing to enter Parliament for the honour of having a vote in the internal affairs of their native land. This fact is in itself sufficient to account for the utter failure of Responsible Government in colonies whose internal affairs are about on a par with the matters brought before an English vestry.

Turning from such important matters as the

administration of justice and tenure of office, the working of Responsible Government assumes an aspect at once pitiable and ludicrous. Colonial politicians, unmindful of modern improvements, cling with reverence to customs long since discarded in the mother country.

In Nova Scotia the "franking" system is in full force, its abuses being enhanced by the low tone of society. A member of the House of Assembly can, by means of his autograph, defraud the postal service to almost any amount without the slightest fear of his being considered mean or ungentlemanlike.* It is likewise the practice of many honourable members to take with them at the close of the session as much public stationery as they can conveniently stow away. There are other eccentricities in the working of Responsible Government too numerous to be mentioned. Election writs are delayed for six months or more; the Speaker of the Lower House canvasses actively for Government nominees; the QUEEN's

* Whole families, even among the upper class of Nova Scotians, do not scruple to avail themselves of their intimacy with "honourable" members of the Legislature, by avoiding all charge upon letters, parcels, boxes, &c., forwarded to all parts of the world. To the colonial mind, such a practice appears rather "smart" than otherwise.

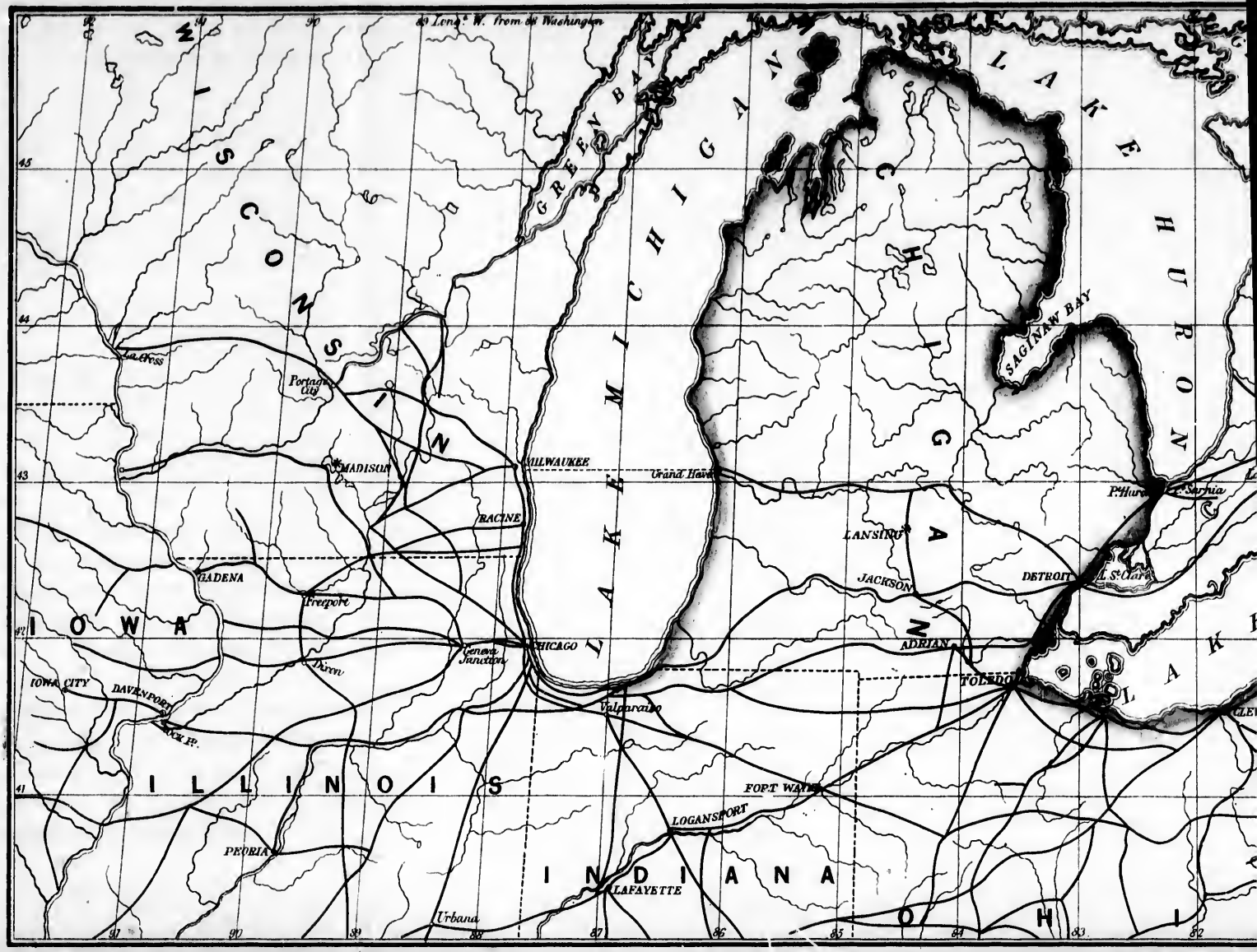
printer ranks very high indeed in the political world;* a Liberal party lost office for raising the electoral franchise, and a so-called Conservative ministry introduced Universal Suffrage. But the chief pecu-

* That Government printing is a sore subject in Canada, may be inferred from the following extract from the *Quebec Daily News*:—"Just before the dinner recess yesterday afternoon, a fracas took place on the floor of the House of Assembly, between the Hon. Mr. Canchon, and Mr. Dufresne, of Iberville, which led to quite a lively excitement and no little commotion. The galleries were immediately cleared, and the House sat with closed doors from six until nine o'clock, but what transpired within can only be indefinitely guessed at. The cause of the altercation was substantially as follows. During the afternoon sitting, Mr. Dufresne moved for a return of all orders issued to Messrs. Cote & Co., proprietors of the *Journal de Quebec*, by the departments for printing, binding, &c., during the last eighteen months. In the debate on this motion a good deal of criminatory and recriminatory language was indulged in. Mr. Dufresne asserted that the quantity of work sent to the *Journal* office was enormous,—in some cases as much as 100,000 blanks at a time, and 50,000 of the same description of blanks a week or so afterwards. Mr. Canchon became heated, and, as he was about leaving the chamber by the side door near the Speaker's chair, and near Mr. Dufresne's seat, he whispered to him that as motions to fish out corruption were the order of the day, he, too, would move for a committee to investigate the working of some Mutual Insurance Companies in Lower Canada—Mr. Dufresne being connected with one—which Mr. Canchon said were nothing better than robbing swindles. Mr. Dufresne replied that he lied, or that whoever said so lied; whereupon Mr. Canchon drew his hand and hit him slightly on the face. There was an instant rush of Members to the spot, the Sergeant-at-Arms was called upon by the Speaker, and there were cries from every part of the House to clear the galleries, which was soon done, and for three subsequent hours a heated discussion took place within, which resulted, we believe, in the matter being placed upon the journal of the House without an apology." Such are the scenes engendered by Responsible Government.

liarity of the existing Parliament of Nova Scotia is, perhaps, its illegality—its members having been elected by men to whom recent legislation has denied the privilege of voting.

It is true that under Responsible Government the American provinces have increased in wealth and importance; but it is also true that since the introduction of politics, the whole tone of society has changed, and changed for the worse. "Life—the life of a large, bustling, active, and irritable class—is engrossed by the mutual struggles of office-hunters and office-holders; and these struggles go on under circumstances at once so lamentable and so ludicrous that we can hardly realize them in our conceptions."

Such was the language of the *Times* concerning Nova Scotia, and a more truthful paragraph was never penned. Viewed in any light, Responsible Government in such colonies as Nova Scotia or New Brunswick cannot but be regarded as an evil—mischievous in its tendencies, contemptible in its practices, and degrading in its results.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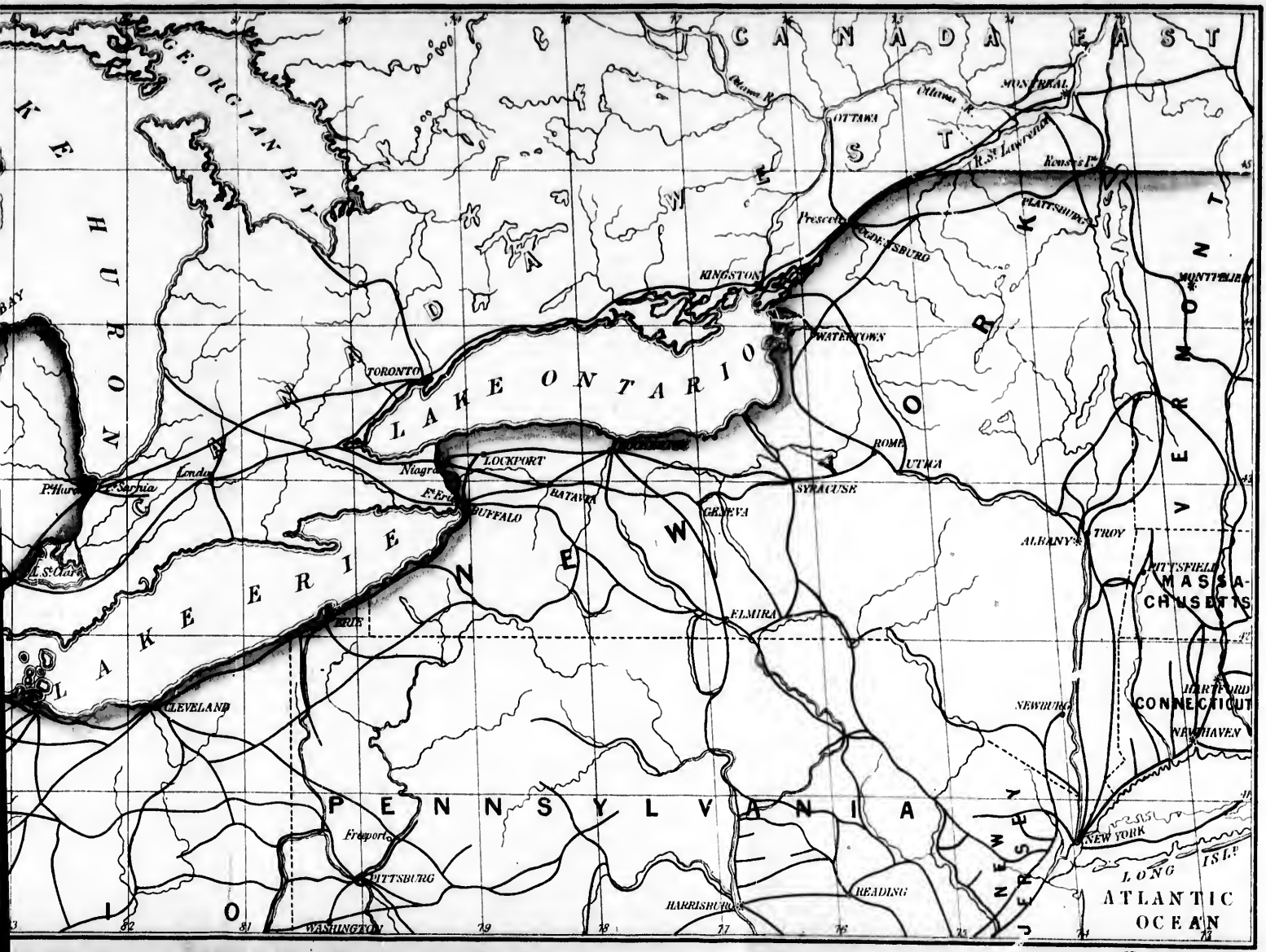

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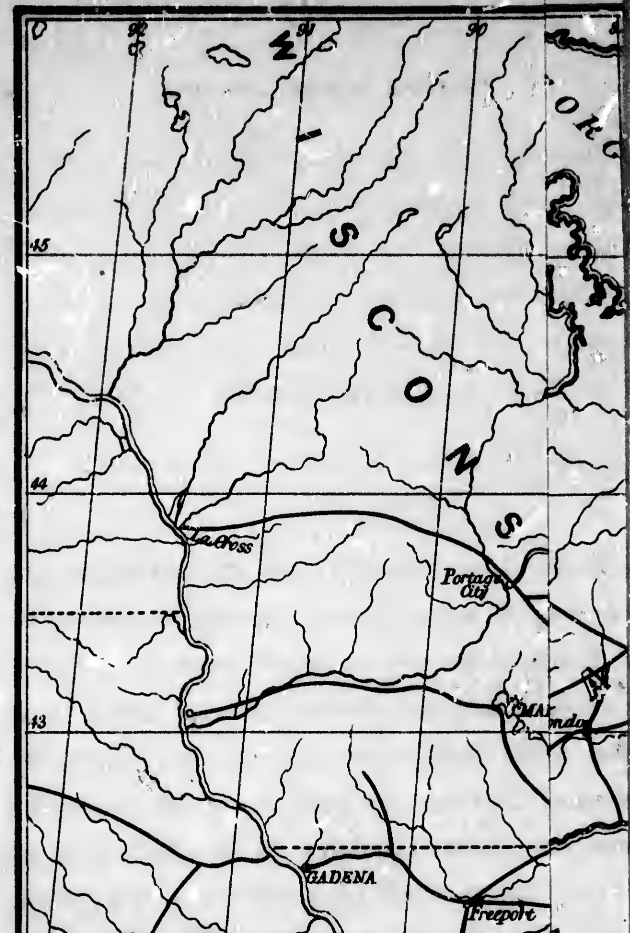

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CHAPTER III.

THE CONFEDERATION SCHEME—ITS REJECTION BY THE LOWER PROVINCES.

WHEN it was noised throughout England that the several provinces of British America were about to be united under one central Government, the supposed wishes of the colonists were applauded to the echo. Men of all parties seemed agreed as to the merits of the Confederation Scheme, and the English press was all but unanimous in its approval of the same. Those who wished to cut the colonies adrift, saw in Confederation a prospect of Canadian independence at no very distant date; those who value our American possessions as a proof of England's greatness among nations, regarded the Confederation project with feelings of joyful pride. The subsequent failure of a scheme so magnificent in theory, called forth many severe strictures upon those colonists who being more directly interested in the matter

than Englishmen, failed to perceive the soundness of arguments put forward only by their politicians. It has often been asserted that in rejecting Confederation the people of the Lower Provinces were actuated by mere petty jealousy, and unmindful of their own welfare. That such was not the case, we shall endeavour to prove.

The past history of Canada is not calculated to inspire much confidence in Canadian statesmen. In 1832, long after all Canadian grievances had been redressed, the House of Assembly espoused the cause of national independence, and on the 21st of February, 1834, passed ninety-two resolutions, designing to establish the American Constitution in lieu of British connexion. On the 3rd October, 1836, the Canadian Assembly, in its Address to the Lieutenant-Governor, asserted that it would adjourn its deliberations till its unconstitutional demands were complied with. Then came rebellion and bloodshed. Following Canadian history down to more recent times, we find the two Canadas unable to remain united, political affairs being, in 1864, at a dead lock, and Canadian ministers at their wits' end. At this important crisis occurred an event by means of which these perplexed politicians hoped to tide over their difficulties.

The people—not merely the *politicians*—the people of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, had long desired a Legislative Union among themselves, under one Government and Legislature; and, on the 26th of March, 1864, a resolution to this effect was passed without division in the Nova Scotian House of Assembly. The Legislatures of New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island, having passed similar resolutions, delegates from the several Provinces were appointed, and a Conference fixed to take place at Charlottetown (Prince Edward's Island) on the 1st September. The politicians of Canada saw in the action of the Lower Provinces a chance of extricating themselves from a grave dilemma, and at once sought permission to be present at the Conference. This request being complied with, the Canadians took little pains to conceal the end they had in view, viz., the setting aside of the programme drawn up by the people of the Maritime Provinces, and the substitution of another scheme to be concocted by themselves. Such at least would seem to be the meaning of the following passage, taken from a report of the Canadian Executive, dated 29th August, 1864:—

"The committee entirely concur in the opinion

expressed by the Lieutenant-Governors, that the proposed meeting must necessarily be of an informal character, but they consider that very great advantage will flow from the opportunity that will be then afforded of considering the practicability of uniting under one Government the respective provinces; and should it be found that a reasonable prospect exists of such a union being practicable, the committee consider that it will then be possible to proceed to a more formal Conference, and to place before the Imperial Government such a general outline of the policy proposed as may enable Her Majesty's ministers to determine whether," &c. &c.*

When the Conference met at Charlottetown, the Canadian delegates, eight in number, were invited to express their views, and, having done so, were allowed to take part in the proceedings. Of the conclusions then arrived at the people of the Lower Provinces were kept entirely ignorant. An idea, however, seemed to prevail that some vast scheme was being prepared, and this idea was strengthened when these same delegates who had repaired to Charlottetown were summoned to a Conference at Quebec on the 10th October.

* "Union of the Colonies" (Blue Book), p. 9.

From this moment the people of the Lower Provinces began to evince symptoms of unmistakeable dissatisfaction. Having been kept in the dark so long, they not unnaturally felt alarm lest some project deeply affecting their future welfare should be agreed upon in their name, without either their knowledge or consent. They, the people, had through their representatives expressed their willingness that delegates should be appointed to discuss the feasibility of a Legislative Union of the Maritime Provinces; but they had not authorised their delegates to go a single step further. The Union of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, was a matter upon which the Legislatures of the several provinces had been consulted, but the question of a Union with Canada had not been discussed in any of the Parliaments for some years. "If," reasoned the people, "it were deemed necessary to pass a resolution in the Assembly authorising delegates to discuss that smaller Union about which we are all agreed, is it not still more necessary that Parliament should be consulted as to the expediency of authorising delegates to treat of a larger Union about which we are not agreed?"

This idea once afloat, spread like wildfire through-

out the length and breadth of the Maritime Provinces, and men of real weight (not politicians) regarded the conduct of the delegates as a piece of consummate impertinence. Public opinion was aroused. Men of property—bankers, merchants, and others having a heavy stake in the several provinces, made their voices heard, and for once condescended to take an active interest in the doings of their politicians. The first question asked in Nova Scotia by those unaccustomed to trouble their heads about mere local politics, was somewhat pertinent. Who are those supposed to represent our interests at the Quebec Conference? This question at once called up the ludicrous side of colonial politics.

Nova Scotia was represented chiefly by two politicians, hating one another with a fierce and deadly hatred—the leader of the Government and the leader of the Opposition. These gentlemen had long been accustomed to write, one of the other, in a style hardly calculated to inspire public confidence in themselves. The Opposition leader was fond of likening his new colleague to Balaam the son of Beor—the likeness, however, consisting not in the latter being reproved by an ass, but in his fondness for untruths. The Government scribe's opinion of the Opposition

leader was not much better—the latter being frequently called "Munchausen," and his sayings contradicted with the elegant heading "Another lie nailed." It is not therefore strange that the people of Nova Scotia should have made up their mind to receive the Quebec scheme with a certain amount of caution. The Conference ended, and the Canadian Confederation scheme made public in all its details, the indignation of the Lower Provinces could no longer be restrained. From almost every county came petitions against the measure; public meetings were organised; party feeling was ignored, and men of all classes joined hand in hand for the purpose of defeating a project planned without their sanction, and utterly repugnant to their wishes.

The New Brunswick Assembly being on the eve of dissolution, it was deemed advisable that a new Parliament should be elected on the single issue of Confederation. The result was such as might have been imagined: the Anti-Confederation party carrying the day against those pledged to support the Quebec scheme.

In Nova Scotia, the existing Parliament having two years to run, the question of Confederation was not brought forward as a Government measure, albeit the

leading men of both political parties were pledged to support it. This fact illustrates most forcibly the truth of a remark made in the last chapter, that in our North American colonies "*public men do not represent the weight of public opinion.*" Since the introduction of Responsible Government, public opinion had never been very much excited, the men of real weight being far too wise to waste their time in discussions about lighthouse-keepers and postmistresses. Confederation was the first and only question of vital importance ever submitted to the people of the Lower Provinces, and the indignant rejection of the Quebec scheme clearly shows that the testimony of professed politicians in such colonies as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is almost valueless. Even a coalition of the leading men of both parties can do nothing in a matter involving the real interests of the people.* Upon this subject Mr. GOLDWIN SMITH justly remarks:—"In colonies there are no historical parties; nor, as the feudal principles on which the Tory party

* Nova Scotia was represented at the Quebec Conference by five delegates, three from the Government party and two from the Opposition. It seems extraordinary that men possessing even a grain of diplomatic talent should have pledged themselves to an all-important measure without first ascertaining the temper of the Parliament to which they were responsible.

rests have never obtained a footing, is there any difference of principle on which a real party division can be based. The so-called parties are consequently mere cabals, and, if a tithe of what the colonial journals say is to be believed, cabals not only of the most factious, but of the most mercenary kind. The governments which emanate from these are, for the same reason, totally devoid of stability: and *if any really great questions were concerned, the consequence would be disastrous.*" *

The conduct of the delegates upon their return to Nova Scotia was singularly ill-judged, and eminently calculated to defeat their own ends. At first they adopted a lofty tone, pooh-poohing those whose views differed from their own, and asserting (by implication at least) their determination to carry the measure with or without the consent of the people whom they had misrepresented. Finding this of no avail, they went "stumping" the country in a manner eminently American, and in doing so, being professional speakers, they had all the odds in their favour. But here again disappointment awaited them. In almost every town and village they found men ready to oppose them.

* "Macmillan's Magazine," March, 1865.

Modest, retiring individuals, who had never before mounted a platform, now came forward and dissected the Canadian project piece-meal. An Anti-Confederation gentleman carried an election against the Government candidate in a district hitherto considered a stronghold of the party in power;* the leading newspaper of the province heartily opposed the measure. In a word, the people had made up their minds to keep well clear of Canada.

The temper of the delegates, thus severely tried, now gave way completely, and all who failed to appreciate the Quebec scheme were fiercely denounced as traitors to their Queen and country.† Then, for the first time in the history of the Maritime Provinces, the people were deliberately asked by the delegates to make their choice between Confederation and *Annexation*—an alternative never even dreamt of save by the delegates themselves. "If they have to fight," said one journal, speaking of the people of Nova Scotia, "would they not rather go to defend

* This has reference to the election of Mr. Ray for Annapolis, N. S.

† The writer of some very able articles published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, setting forth the geographical absurdity of the Confederation scheme, was dubbed a "traitor" by a Nova Scotian delegate—the Hon. J. McCully, M.L.C. The colonists, strangely enough, seemed to suppose that none but themselves can possibly be interested in our colonial policy.

their fellow-countrymen in Canada, in the hour of dire necessity, than have their bones bleach on southern soil, in far-off Mexico, or on some western prairie?"*

Such is a fair specimen of the style of argument by which those pledged to support Confederation tried to terrify their opponents into submission. At other times, attempts were made to influence men's minds by depicting the glories of the Parliament Houses at Ottawa; indeed, one delegate (the Hon. J. M'CULLY, M.L.C.) worked himself into a positive ecstacy of enthusiasm about their "miles of cornice and acres of plaster." The same eccentric gentleman sought to make capital even out of an English general election:—

"If further proof of the approbation of the British people of the scheme for Confederation were wanted, surely we have it now in the decided success that Lord Palmerston's Government has achieved at the recent elections. So unanimous is British sentiment upon this subject, that although referred to both in the opening and closing speeches of Her Majesty at the late session, we do not remember to have seen a

* *Halifax Reporter*, Dec. 12th, 1865.

paragraph in a British newspaper doubting the policy, or raising a question before a constituency, as to the propriety of the measure. Almost every act of the Government, from the acknowledgment of the kingdom of Italy down to the Permissive Liquor Licence Bill, has been arraigned; but by whom, or when, or where has Mr. Cardwell's policy been arraigned in his expressed 'determination'—for that is his word—to secure a Confederation of British America?"*

But all was of no avail: the common sense of the people refusing either to be terrified or cajoled into Confederation. The Quebec scheme has been rejected by Nova Scotia, Prince Edward's Island, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, and we shall now endeavour to show that such rejection on the part of the Lower Provinces was justifiable.

It must not be forgotten that British America forms a third part of the American Continent, and is larger than Europe or the United States. The Lower Provinces form a compact group, lying between 43° and 48° north latitude, and 59° 40′ and 66° 35′ west longitude. Canada, on the other hand, lies side by side with the United States throughout 22° of lon-

* *Halifax Unionist*, August 7th, 1865.

gitude, and has a land and water frontier of not less than 1500 miles. To suppose that Nova Scotia, which is almost an island, would be strengthened in a military point of view by becoming part and parcel of a new nationality, whereof Canada formed the greater portion, would be to ignore geography altogether.

If England and the United States were at war, Canada could not spare a man for the defence of Nova Scotia. Were an attack planned against Nova Scotia, the first operation would be to destroy that portion of the Intercolonial Railway (supposing such a line in existence) nearest the Maine frontier of New Brunswick, and thus leave the winter communication between Halifax and Quebec no better than it is at present. Seeing, therefore, that no Canadians can be spared for the defence of Nova Scotia, and that, even if they could be spared, they would most assuredly be hindered, it is not easy to perceive how an union with Canada would strengthen Nova Scotia for defence In the event of war, every soldier in British America would be under the control of one central authority whether the several provinces were or were not politically united, and there is no reason to suppose that the yearly transfer of a few professed politicians

from their native shores to Ottawa would render our North American force more formidable than it is at present. Taking these facts into consideration, the people of Nova Scotia were not a little surprised to find the Governor-General (Lord MONCK) alluding to the advantages of union for purposes of defence as—"So obvious that it would be a waste of time to state them."*

The constitution framed at Quebec, and professing "to follow the model of the British Constitution, so far as our circumstances will permit,"† was as unlike the constitution of Great Britain as it well could be, being in fact a mere copy of the American Constitution. "Ottawa," remarks Mr. GOLDWIN SMITH, "as a factitious capital, is the exact counterpart of Washington; and at Ottawa, as at Washington, we shall too probably see the least worthy citizens of the Federation collected together, during several months in each year, without even the tempering and restraining influences which the mixed society of a real capital affords, an unadulterated element of professional politicians, devoting their

* Lord Monck's letter to the Right Hon. E. Cardwell, M.P., November 7th, 1864.

† "Report of the Quebec Conference," Resolution 3.

whole time to the undivided work of corruption and intrigue."*

The people of the Lower Provinces having evinced their preference for the constitution of the mother country by their anxiety for a Legislative Union among themselves, were ill disposed to favour a Federal Union upon any terms whatever. The sad scenes then being enacted south of the Potomac were not calculated to inspire confidence in the stability of any union based upon American principles. If, reasoned the colonists—a Federal Union planned by men of the purest and most disinterested patriotism, and ratified by public opinion in every State included in the Declaration of Independence, cannot be maintained in its integrity without four years of devastation and bloodshed, what may be expected from a useless and ill-considered union with a country in whose affairs we take little or no interest? It may be urged that no question of slavery could arise to disturb the equanimity of British America, and that the best guarantee against the secession of one or more provinces would be the moral weight attaching to the whole as a part of the British Empire. The

* "Macmillan's Magazine," March, 1865.

latter consideration would be entitled to much weight, were it possible either to expunge the United States from the western hemisphere, or to alter the geographical position of British America. But so long as the United States remain great, powerful, and in close proximity with the British possessions, so long may a British province wishing to secede from the Confederation count upon American support. The possibility of such a contingency, coupled with England's oft-expressed determination not to force the wishes of any of her self-governing colonies, must ever threaten the very existence of the proposed nationality.

The opening resolutions adopted at the Quebec Conference imply a certain amount of faith in consolidation. But if the Canadian delegates really desired consolidation for no other purpose but their country's good, why was Mr. GEORGE BROWN, a delegate, and President of the Canadian Executive, pledged to *disunite* the Canadas in the event of the Quebec scheme proving a failure?* Had the people,

* "The Government of Canada is pledged *in written documents* that in a certain contingency (the failure of a Confederation of all the provinces), they will take up the question of Canadian Confederation at the next session of Parliament. That pledge is made most distinctly and positively, and commits not merely one but both sections of the Government."—*Toronto Globe*, October 25th,

or more correctly speaking, the politicians of Canada, desired union on grounds other than those of mere political exigency, it would surely have been wise to let the Maritime Provinces first unite among themselves, and thus obviate the necessity of dealing with three Governments rather than one. This view of the case was adopted by Sir R. G. MacDonnell in a letter to Mr. Cardwell, dated 18th July, 1864.

"In the meantime I venture to add, in reference to the suggestion of Lord Monck, that it seems premature to discuss the larger question of a union of the five provinces before it is ascertained whether the three smaller, whose interests are more immediately and more evidently connected, can be induced to combine in closer connection. I apprehend that the more limited project, if practicable at all, as I hope it is, is all that can be managed for some time to come; whilst if the larger proposal be attainable, and be desirable, its adoption will eventually be in this way much facilitated. I think so, because a union between two communities, which would be all that would then remain to be accomplished, will assuredly

1865. It may be well to state that the *Globe* is the organ of Mr. George Brown, and that in America newspapers are the exponents of the intentions of individual ministers.

be a simpler question to arrange than a union between five as at present."

That the discussion of "the larger question of a union was premature," subsequent events have clearly proved; indeed, that Sir R. G. MacDonnell early foresaw the utter hopelessness of Confederation is manifest from the following passage in a letter to Mr. Cardwell, dated Halifax, 18th August, 1864 :—

"I foresee, however, great difficulty of detail, which must be surmounted before any real progress can be made in arranging either a partial or general scheme of union, whether federal or legislative. * * * I always spoke hopefully of greater united action on the part of these colonies in many important matters, but I never intended, and it would be premature as well as inconsistent with the duties of my position, to have appeared as an advocate of any general union in the sense intended by other speakers."

The English press, in its enthusiastic reception of the Quebec scheme, dealt hard measure to the people of the Maritime Provinces. In the *Saturday Review*, 28th October, 1865, occur the following remarks :—

"The obscurity which has shrouded this region, crippled their trade, and repelled the stream of emigration, is easily accounted for. They are shut out—

partly by nature, partly by political accidents, but chiefly by their own choice—from effectual intercourse with the outer world. * * * Representing as they do the natural outlet of all British America to the sea, the advantages have been destroyed by a petty jealousy, which has kept them aloof from their best friends and their best customers, * * * but the strangest part of the whole story is, that these Maritime Colonies of Great Britain are enamoured of their isolation."

Such, we may presume, are the ideas of ninety-nine Englishmen out of a hundred concerning the Lower Provinces. It is difficult to understand the meaning of the term "isolation" as applied to Nova Scotia, a province whose ships may be seen in all waters, from the River Plate to the Bay of Bengal. One county of Nova Scotia* owns 199 vessels, with an aggregate of not less than 71,830 tons; and the whole mercantile marine of Nova Scotia equals a ton of shipping for every living soul within the province. But supposing, merely for argument's sake, that the Canadians might prove the "best customers" of Nova Scotia, whose fault is it that little or no commercial inter-

* The county of Yarmouth.

course has hitherto existed between the two countries? To borrow the language of a Halifax paper: "Trade cannot be forced into uncongenial channels any more than water can be made to run up hill; and if the United States buy eighty times as much worth of our produce as Canada, and sell us a hundred times as much as they did in 1864, it is hardly a good reason why we should be charged with 'jealousy.' We have free trade now with Canada in everything but manufactures, and that can be had, too, if it is particularly desired, without Confederation. We would be delighted to extend our trade with Canada, that they should, if possible, become our 'best customers,' but we fear it will be a long time before the three millions of Canadians will supply the place of the thirty millions of customers we now have in the States."*

This reasoning seems fair enough: the chief exports of Canada are flour and timber, and it is far cheaper for Nova Scotia to import flour from the United States, and timber (if required) from New Brunswick, than to import either from a country more distant. The grain producers of Canada West find a ready market at Buffalo, between which port and New York there is direct communication by rail. The

* *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, November 21st, 1865.

natural winter outlet of Lower Canadian produce is Portland. Had the Canadians wished to trade with the Lower Provinces rather than with the States, they might readily have done so, the people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick having for twenty years back laboured to establish the connection by means of an intercolonial railway. But all the obstruction to such a measure came from the Canadians themselves, who preferred communication and trade with Portland and the United States.

It was not until the politicians of Canada found themselves utterly unable to carry on the government of their country that they seemed in earnest about undertaking their share of the intercolonial line. When they found that the two Canadas could not remain united unless the Lower Provinces could be induced to link their destinies with those of Canada, for better or for worse—when Canadian affairs had reached this crisis—then, indeed, the speedy construction of the Intercolonial Railway took the form of a bribe. But this bribe, insufficient in itself, came too late, inasmuch as the European and North American Railway was already in course of construction, and the necessity (if any) for an intercolonial line had passed away.

Canada was prepared to enter the Confederation with a debt of $62,500,000 (12,500,000*l.*), an enormous sum for a country so poor and thinly populated. This debt was incurred by extravagances such as would never have been dreamt of but for Canada's connection with England, by the construction of that gigantic folly, the Grand Trunk Railway, and other works equally unproductive.* In Nova Scotia, on the contrary, almost every farthing of the provincial debt of $8,000,000 (1,600,000*l.*) is represented by public works and railways which even now pay something over the cost of management, and the revenues of which are yearly increasing. Under Confederation, the central Government, in assuming the debt of Nova Scotia, would receive property of a like value; whereas Nova Scotia, in assuming her proportion of Canada's debt, would but share the latter country's unproductive property, as also a not inconsiderable number of decidedly bad debts incurred by sundry borrowings to meet deficiencies of revenue.† The central Government would take the whole of the customs and excise revenues of Nova Scotia (about

* The cost of the new Parliament Buildings at Ottawa must prove something enormous.

† A stranger travelling through Canada is much struck by the numerous cases of public embezzlement called up for his edification.

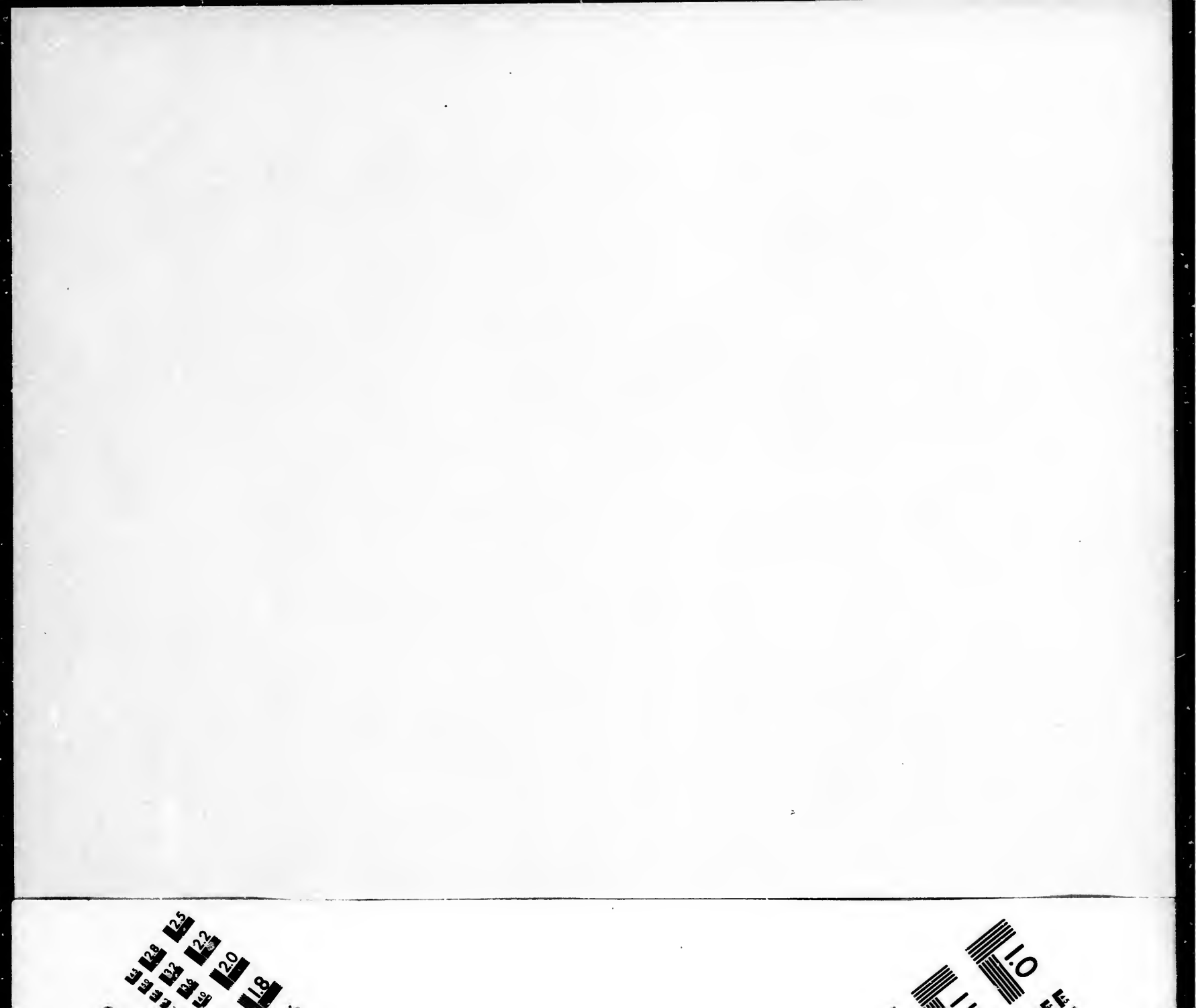
240,000*l.*), giving in return 80 cents (5*s.* 4*d.*) per head, estimated on the population returns of 1861 (52,000*l.*), a sum about equal to that which the existing Nova Scotian Administration annually expends upon roads. "It is true," says the *Halifax Chronicle*, "that the general Government would be charged with the interest on the $8,000,000, the salaries of the governor and the judges, the expenses of the customs, post-office, lighthouse, militia, and several minor services, but every farthing we are to get back to uphold and maintain the local Government of our province, for education, roads and bridges, packets, ferries, navigation securities, &c., is $264,000 (52,800*l.*) a-year. That is all we would get back now when our customs revenue is over a million of dollars (250,000*l.*) under a 10 per cent. *ad valorem;* it is all we would get back under a 20 per cent. tariff, even if it realised two millions; it is all we would get back when our population is quintupled, and the customs and excise duties in this province perhaps realise eight or ten millions (dollars) per annum."

Under existing circumstances the public service of Nova Scotia costs about $169,122 against a revenue of $1,000,000, thus leaving a surplus of $840,878 to be expended upon public works. Deducting from this

sum the interest upon the provincial debt (supposing the provincial railways to pay their expenses, and nothing more), there still remains for roads, bridges, ferries, &c., a sum of $360,878. Were the several Provinces confederated under the terms agreed upon at Quebec, Nova Scotia would receive from the central Government only $264,000, from which sum must be deducted the cost of the local Government—say $64,000. The direct loss to Nova Scotia in the event of Confederation would, therefore, be $160,878, or 32,175*l.* 12*s.* sterling, per annum. It may perhaps be doubted whether the honour of being included in a "new nationality" is worth the pecuniary risk involved in the case under discussion. In a young country, such as Nova Scotia, the importance of liberal grants for roads, bridges, ferries, &c., can hardly be over-estimated; indeed every dollar withheld from this service tends not merely to cramp the energies of the settlers, but to check immigration—the one thing wanted to develop the vast natural resources of the province. The glowing pictures which have been drawn of British America's possible future fail to interest men living by the sweat of their brow. Such men know that they are taxed upon every pound of tea and sugar they consume, but they

cannot see why the revenue derived from such taxation should be even partially expended upon—it may be—the fortifications of Montreal. To expect that the people of New Brunswick or Nova Scotia will interest themselves in Canadian affairs as the people of Essex interest themselves in the affairs of Cornwall, is to expect that which is, in the nature of things, simply impossible.

The cordiality with which all classes in England welcomed the Confederation scheme was, doubtless, based upon the supposition that the details of the scheme could be accepted in good faith, as meaning exactly what they professed to mean. Of the circumstances of most of our colonies the generality of our countrymen are profoundly ignorant, but every educated Englishman knows that colonial defence costs the country between three and four millions a-year; and that of some thirteen or fourteen millions yearly voted for military purposes, a not inconsiderable sum finds its way into the colonies. Under these circumstances the details of the Confederation scheme were well calculated to ease the minds of British taxpayers. "Military and Naval Service and Defence" were among the items to be provided for by the central Government. But for this important branch of the



new nation's public service only 250,000*l.* was offered,* being an advance upon the money already voted of only 100,000*l.* As it soon transpired that the whole sum of 250,000*l.* was to be expended upon a militia force, we must be content to suppose that the words "naval service," in the 13th clause of the 29th resolution adopted at the Quebec Conference meant nothing whatever!

But as regards the Lower Provinces, the defence scheme had two aspects. The people were informed, in the first instance, that they were to become, in the twinkling of an eye, a first-rate military and naval power for the modest sum of 250,000*l.* per annum. But as it afterwards turned out, this sum was to be augmented by the cost of works to be thrown up at the expense of the colonists around Montreal. The people of the Maritime Provinces deemed it but fair that the defence of Montreal should be undertaken and paid for by the Canadians alone. Union once accomplished, however, the Canadian majority would have had the game in their own hands.

Of the conduct of the Nova Scotian delegates in this part of the transaction it is difficult to speak.

* This was the sum as stated by Mr. Archibald, one of the Nova Scotian delegates.

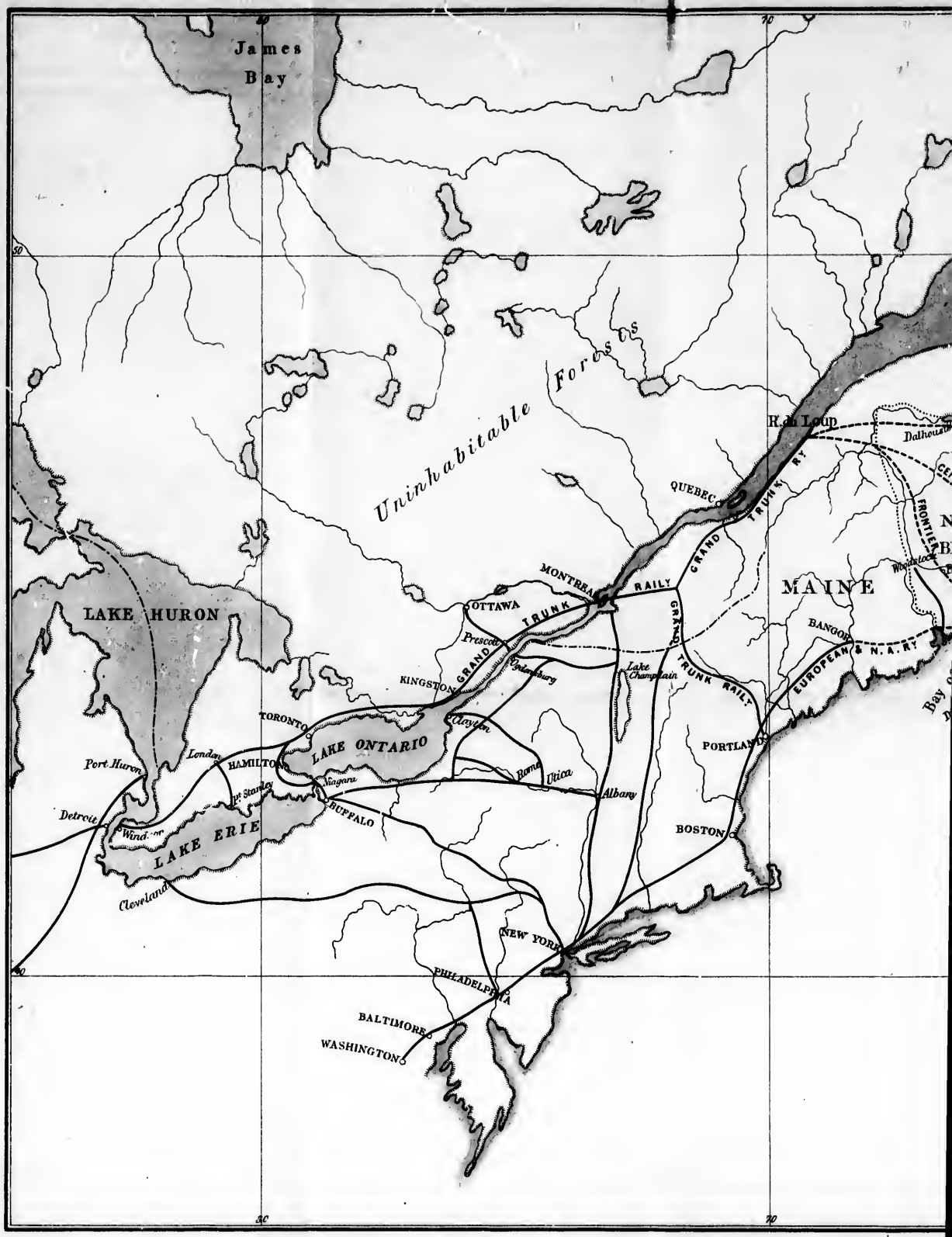
They must have known that vast fortifications were required to protect the Canadian frontier, and that the united Provinces would be called upon to pay for such works. Yet the scheme, as explained by the deleg tes, went no further than 250,000*l.*

Nova Scotia is at present prosperous in the highest degree. Every branch of her trade is in a flourishing condition; her population is rapidly increasing; her mineral wealth is becoming known. Above all, her people are united and ready at a moment's notice to take up arms for the sake of British connection. But they are not disposed to enter into a Union based on disunion, nor to imperil their present relations with England in order to humour the eccentricities of Canadian politicians.

CHAPTER IV.

CANADIAN DEFENCES.

Were there no other causes for the disinclination evinced by the Lower Provinces to an union with Canada, the geographical position of that province would sufficiently justify their repugnance to the measure. The Lower Provinces see in Confederation an incorporation of their easily defensible selves with a vast conglomeration of provinces occupying, taken as a whole, the most unfavourable geographical position in the world. The inhabitants of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward's Island may with reason think twice before sanctioning the removal of their Government and Legislature to a country which, as many English writers have demonstrated, is totally incapable of self-defence. They are justified in saying, we would rather remain small but secure, than become part and parcel of a Confederation, whose largest portion must be noted for its insecurity.


James Bay
Uninhabitable Forests
R. du Loup
Dalhousie
QUEBEC
GRAND TRUNK RY.
FRONTIER
MAINE
MONTREAL
OTTAWA
GRAND TRUNK RAILY
LAKE HURON
Prescott
Brockville
KINGSTON
Lake Champlain
BANGOR
EUROPEAN & N.A. RY
TORONTO
Clayton
LAKE ONTARIO
PORTLAND
London
HAMILTON
Port Huron
Niagara
Rome
Utica
Albany
St Stanley
Detroit
Wind.r
BUFFALO
BOSTON
LAKE ERIE
Cleveland
NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA
BALTIMORE
WASHINGTON

CANADIAN FRONTIER.

Vincent Brooks, Lith.


James
Bay

There is no idle jealousy in this feeling. It is totally apart from any reflections on the political character of Canadians. It is simply a geographical consideration, and, since it is difficult to overcome geography, is one deserving of every attention. Canada is so situated, that an invasion of her shores would doubtless be supported by every prospect of success. Equally certain is it, that the inhabitants of Prince Edward's Island and Nova Scotia have never given to the fear of invasion a moment's thought. It may be selfish of these provinces to value the security afforded by their geographical position. It might be nobler, were there any cause for so doing, to throw in their lot with their Canadian cousins. As there is no necessity for this, however, since 3,000,000 Canadians would not be materially strengthened by an additional population of 600,000 men and a largely-increased frontier, the selfishness of the Lower Provinces is by no means clearly proved. Were it possible to imagine ourselves in a similar position, how should we act? Were it proposed that England should enter into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with a nation whose situation rendered all hope of resisting invasion vain;—were we asked to make her seat of Government ours—to move our Legislature to

an insecure spot within her borders—to exchange London for a city which, in the event of war, could not pretend to security, and which our whole available force could not make secure from occupation by the enemy—should we not scout the notion as ridiculous, whatever advantages, commercial or financial, might be offered in exchange? Yet those who are most ready to admit the impossibility of a successful resistance to invasion on the part of Canada, are most earnest for a Confederation of the provinces which, for an increase of military power to Canada, is useless. Geography would forbid mutual aid from one province to the other. The troops of the Lower Provinces could never assist Canada, and in time of invasion it were impossible for Canadians to protect the Lower Provinces. It were idle to imagine that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick could afford troops for the defence of Toronto, were that town attacked. Apart from the improbability of that city ever being reached, their services would be required at home. Were the proposed general Government at Ottawa to pass an Act mobilising the militia of New Brunswick, and order a portion of it to undergo the dangers of march along the Canadian frontier, that Hamilton or even Montreal might be reinforced, would not a refusal of

the New Brunswickers to exchange a strong position around their homes for a weak one in a distant land be justified both by patriotism and common sense? Again, it is very doubtful whether in times of peace the militia organisation of the Lower Provinces would be improved by the removal of head-quarters to Ottawa. For all practical purposes the various provincial militias are at present as much under the control of the Commander-in-Chief of British North America as they possibly could be. The advantages to accrue from the administration of detail in these corps by offices removed from them 800 or 1000 miles is not apparent. Since it is an open question whether a British army of 100,000 men could protect the Canadian frontier, it is evident that when with all our power we might expect to fail, the Lower Provinces can hardly be expected to succeed.

Union is not always strength. Our union with Canada is not a source of strength to us, and we are aware that such is the case. Yet Canada is, virtually, as far from the Lower Provinces as from England. It is not the Atlantic Ocean which renders Canada an untenable position for British troops. The frozen gulf, the wilderness between New Brunswick and Canada, and the vastness and length of the Canadian

frontier are the real sources of her weakness and that of those provinces to which she is attached.

No people was ever so unfortunately situated as regards defence as are the Canadians. No country except Canada is *one-sided*. She has a front but no back. Her population does not extend in many parts further to the interior than is covered by red paint on the map. Beyond this there is nothing—no sea, no land fit for settlement—nothing to show that in process of time an increase of population can be expected. The small existing stream of emigration flows westwards. The further we go west the thinner we find is the population.

The strength of British North America is that of a fishing-rod. A serviceable policeman's bâton could be made from the butt end, whilst the further we reach towards the point weaker and weaker does it become. The further westward we go, the weaker becomes the defensive power of our North American possessions. The Lower Provinces are the butt end of the rod. Quebec may represent the first joint, Montreal the second, and Niagara the third. The point at this moment rests at Windsor, opposite Detroit, and is easily to be discerned by the map, pressing directly against the populous state of

Michigan. Here the Canadian railways end. Those of the United States extend westward and north-westward of Windsor for 700 or 800 miles. To carry out this simile a little further: Apart from all danger of a fracture by a force applied to its centre the fishing-rod has pressing upon its point a very strong resisting power, lying west and north-west. In plain words, over and above all danger of lateral invasion from the States lying south, the Canadian flank is liable to be turned, or, to speak more correctly, its western point broken by the crushing American power which overhangs and surrounds the westernmost settled districts.

A further increase of frontier only makes matters worse. The addition of the Hudson's Bay territory renders Canada, if possible, weaker than before. The United States have already got 700 or 800 miles start of her, an advantage which it is impossible for Canada to overcome. However far westward Canadian settlements may extend, those of the States must always extend hundreds of miles further in the same direction. Thus, however thickly settled the Canadian frontier may become, its flank can always be turned by the railways and civilisation overlapping its most western parts.

What object Canadian politicians have in view in seeking to purchase the North-west territory it is impossible to conceive. If it be merely as a commercial speculation we cannot with justice be called upon to guarantee the money required for the operation. If viewed as a measure calculated to increase the stability of Canada, we should surely be allowed to be governed by our own opinions, and if the purchase appears to us useless for such an object, refuse the purchase-money accordingly.*

It were criminal in our Government to encourage Canadian extravagance by enabling Canada to borrow money at a low rate of interest for purposes appearing to us without object. If we have it in our power to benefit our colonies by guarantees, it is certainly our duty to be most careful how we exercise that power. Hitherto Canada has been refused nothing. Everything that she asked has been promised.

It is fortunate that these engagements into which we have entered are subject to the condition of a

* A supposition put forth upon the other side of the water is doubtless as untrue as it is vile. It has been suggested that far-seeing Canadian politicians, having in their eyes the probable annexation of Canada to the States, are anxious to take with them as much British territory as possible. The Hudson's Bay territory, it is urged, once in the hands of the United States, the position of our Pacific colonies would be untenable.

Federation of the Provinces. If that fail to become a fact a chance will be afforded of reconsidering that policy which seems to put a premium upon Canadian extravagance.

Supposing, however, Confederation accomplished—our guarantee granted—the North-western territory incorporated with Canada—the Intercolonial Railway constructed—Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto fortified—how is the defence question nearer a solution than at present? At what western point is British honour to abstain from feeling insulted by the invasion or occupation of Canadian soil? Are we liable to calls for money that a series of forts may be erected on a parallel of latitude to the foot of the Rocky Mountains? Is our honour to be interested in the defence of frontier settlements 3000 miles from the seaboard? The pursuit of our Confederation policy can lead to no other result. Canada, however far she may extend west, can never become *thicker* than she now is. The valuable land lying north of the 49th degree of latitude is but little broader even on the Red River than it is between Montreal and Toronto. Where, then, are we to stop? If we arrive at the conclusion that to Quebec or Montreal and no further shall British troops penetrate, the more westerly Canadian

extension proceeds the more useless becomes Imperial assistance. Were we, on the other hand, to determine that all Canadian soil must be secured from invasion —that Canada's honour is ever to be ours—the difficulty becomes absolutely limitless. In either case the extension of Canada by the purchase of the Hudson's Bay territory is for British purposes a measure rather to be deprecated than encouraged. The prospects of Canadians indeed as they now stand would in time of war be poor in the extreme. It is positively painful to consider the dangers to which in such time they would be exposed. As their geographical position is exceptional, so also the miseries of the whole population in the event of war must likewise prove exceptional.

No reference to Jomini or other war theorists is required to show the position of Canada at present to be weak beyond precedent. The most that is urged as possible by men most sanguine in the way of defence is the protection of some few large cities by a concentration of force within their immediate borders. Toronto, Montreal, and Quebec, the three most populous cities of the province, could, it is asserted, were the Canadians to rise and arm as one man, be defended. These towns, separated from each other by

hundreds of miles of totally indefensible frontier, might possibly withstand a siege for some months.

Substituting Great Britain for Canada, this is equivalent to saying that London, Glasgow, and Manchester might possibly be effectually fortified, though all intercourse between the three points must of necessity during winter be abandoned. The three richest cities of Canada may resist, for a short time, attack with no strategic object in view, whilst the remainder of the country falls into the hands of an invading enemy. The fortification of these three points has no military value whatsoever. Devoid of all intercommunication,* as they necessarily must be unless every inch of the frontier were strongly guarded, as points of *appui* to an army in the field, they become useless. This objection, however, is somewhat overcome by the reflection that an army in the field between Montreal and Toronto is a sheer impossibility. There are no fields for operation but those on the actual frontier, nor is there any communication between the several proposed fortresses removed to any safe distance from the boundary line; Canada therefore, supposing her people eager for strife,

* St. Lawrence.

Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto strengthened to withstand attacks, and 50,000 British troops arrived safely at Quebec for her assistance, can merely be regarded as a *line of operations* flanked throughout its entire length of 1500 miles by a hostile and energetic population of 20,000,000 souls. Canada can never become more than a *line* of operations. A line is length without breadth, and such for all military purposes is Canada. Were England and the United States at war, moreover, this thin fringe of frontier would be exposed to other dangers than those entailed by a regular military or naval attack on the principal cities. From near Montreal to Lake Erie, Canada is bounded (where Lake Ontario does not intervene) by the most populous State of the American Union. The State of New York alone exceeds Canada in population. Five railways from all parts of the Union debouch upon the frontier. Another runs near the thickly populated shore of Lake Ontario. What, then, would be more probable in war time than raids across the frontier? It would be impossible to guard the Grand Trunk Railway, our only means of communication, throughout its entire length. The similarity in manner and pronunciation between Canadians and citizens of the great Republic would render raids safe

and operations easy. A party of eight or ten men could without difficulty impede all travel on the railway for twenty-four hours, and hope to escape undetected. The raid upon the St. Albans banks effected by a few Southerners shows the facilities afforded for such enterprises. Incursions of a larger nature, with robbery as their object, would promise successful results.

Every village on the frontier could not expect a guard. Every village on the frontier must expect a raid. The position of the whole country would be so intolerable that a cry for immediate annexation would be the result.

That Canadians themselves are willing to admit their indefensibility is apparent from their policy both at present and in times past. No effort has been made towards fortifying cities—the militia and volunteers have been a constant cause of complaint to the British Government. The Intercolonial Railway, fifteen times talked about and surveyed, remains uncompleted. Not a sod has been turned or a brick moved for the erection of fortifications by the Canadians.*

Mr. D'Arcy McGee, a leading member of the

* The fortifications of Montreal are not yet commenced.

coalition Government strongly in favour of Confederation, spoke as follows at Montreal, on the 15th November, 1865:—"Will you unite, or will you give up your country to another Government and another people? Without union we cannot have the Inter-colonial Railway, and without the road we cannot have direct intercourse with the mother country—and without both we are at the mercy of another Government and another people." *

This speech can only mean that Canada has at present none of the elements essential to stability. We have attempted to show that the addition of a population numbering but 600,000 or 700,000 souls and separated from Canada by several hundred miles cannot materially improve her condition. How, then, Canadian politicians can expect a great increase of strength by Confederation it is difficult to perceive. The mass of the people, we are told by the *Times* correspondent in his letters from Canada, do not trouble themselves either one way or the other about

* Mr. D'Arcy McGee, Montreal, November, 1865.—If without the "road" Canada is at the mercy of another Government (the United States), it seems strange that the Intercolonial line should still remain uncommenced. If the measure of Canadian patriotism be the cost of "the road," it is evidently limited in the extreme.

the measure. They either do not see in it a prospect of greater security from invasion, or they are prepared at the first occupation of their territory to avoid the miseries of siege and plunder by a quiet submission to the enemy. Canadians do not desire to see their cities fortified and their purses emptied, with no prospect before them of ever making a successful resistance. How is it, then, that the Confederation scheme is so strongly urged, by the Canadian Government upon that of Great Britain, as one calculated to strengthen Canada? It may be that a measure which in our innocence we imagine to have a tendency to ease our colonial burdens, is intended by Canadian statesmen to have a diametrically opposite effect. It may be that the defence of Canada is to become, in the event of Confederation, a greater Imperial necessity than ever. One of the strongest reasons urged by Canadian politicians in favour of Confederation is this—"The Home Government desires you to confederate. Do so, and it guarantees a large sum of money for the extension of British North America westward, the defence of Quebec, and the construction of an intercolonial railway. What is the meaning of this conduct on the part of the Home Government? It means simply that, confederated,

she will help us with all her might should we require her aid;* but that if we remain disunited her troops will be immediately removed, and all hope of assistance in times of trouble taken from us." It must be remembered, moreover, that besides this argument, which can be given openly in favour of Confederation, there is a corollary which it may not always be prudent for colonial statesmen to make public. Fifteen or twenty millions guaranteed by the British Government binds England to Canada by that sum. Great Britain has a vested interest in Canada of that amount. The speech of the leading Canadian unionist, Mr. D'Arcy McGee, viewed thus, loses its vagueness. It is indeed only by regarding it as an exponent of such a policy on the part of Canada that it can be made to have any meaning at all. Whether speeches such as these can be favourably received in England or not is another question. Our Government has a hope that by Confederation Canada and the Lower Provinces will assume a status of their own in the political world—that after living for a few years under our wing a new nation can be formed, allied with us, grateful to us, and perhaps bound to us by

* This feeling is still more prominent amongst the party in the Lower Provinces favourable to Confederation.

such ties of treaty as will demand a certain protection from Great Britain should danger arise.

Canadian politicians, on the contrary, and those who support Confederation in the Lower Provinces, view the matter in a totally different light. They see in the desire of our Government to unite the separate provinces of British North America, an earnest wish to make the defence of Canada a measure of Imperial necessity, and in our proposed guarantee of certain moneys a stamp on their surmises as correct.

With this policy on the part of Canadians no fault can be found. By every means in their power to prolong the union with Great Britain is no ignoble motive for the actions of Canadian statesmen. It cannot, however, fail to strike Englishmen as strange, that if the majority of Canadians are earnest in their profession of love for the old country, more has not been done in the way of self-defence.

To this many causes could be assigned. The miserable geographical position of Canada; the absence of enthusiasm of her inhabitants; and lastly, a perhaps more potent cause than all the rest—Great Britain enters into diplomatic relations with a colony, and the colony expects the defence to be done for her.*

* The connection having been once placed upon such a footing,

The old country has no more chance with her colony than has a kind mother with a spoilt child of mature age. The feeling of dependence may remain; the feeling of respect, the love of obedience, is absent. In knowledge of the world the grown-up child is before the mother. The latter is loath to admit a sordid avarice in her once beloved and troublesome offspring. He laughs quietly at his mother's simplicity, and implores a last settlement of his debts.

A nation such as England treating with a colony about money matters cannot but fail in the long-run. Sentiment and ready money are entirely on our side —hard dollar and cent calculations, and an absence of money and public spirit on the other. It is the merest cant to talk about the danger of rendering

the number of deputations from the American colonists which visit London annually is not surprising. The Governor-General and Lieutenant-Governors having little power but that conferred by their councils, England, when treating with Canada, is in reality treating with a friendly power—especially so far as matters connected with finance are concerned. Mr. Russell well describes the relations between England and Canada on the defence question as they existed in 1862:—"Canada did not know how far England would go in her defence, and seemed fearful of granting anything, lest it might be an obligation which the mother country would have otherwise incurred, whilst England, by witholding any definite promise, or indulging only in vague remonstrances, sought to make the Canadians show their hands. Each was anxious for an answer to the question: How much will you give us?"—"Russell's Canada," pp. 20, 21.

inimical a population of 3,000,000 if all their requests are not granted.

A refusal on our part to encourage Canada in extravagance by our guarantees is far more likely to result in British indignation against Canada than a hostile feeling on the part of Canadians to the mother country. When in time of war Canadian statesmen shall implore our aid, and declare that if not granted their lot shall be cast in with the United States, the word guarantee will rise awkwardly to English lips.* The more money lent to our colonies the more must they get the whip-hand of the mother country. The game is in their own hands. If we lend Canada 15,000,000*l.* it might be worth our while to spend

* Too much importance cannot be attached to this consideration. The more we lend Canada the more it is in her power to demand. Suppose, for instance, that at some future period she desires money for the construction of a railway to the Pacific, and asks us for it. If at the time of this demand our relations with the States are not on more friendly terms than they usually are, Canada could almost force us to accede to her request, by a threat of joining the United States. Rather than enter upon a war, it would probably be our wisest policy to advance the money. There surely can be no better time to put a stop to this every day increasing snowball of indebtedness than at present. If we do not take advantage of this opportunity, when the money is demanded for objects which we consider useless, we may never get another. Fifty years hence the old story of not wishing to make enemies of 3,000,000 people may be repeated. Canada, by refusing the establishment of a sinking fund, by which her liabilities for the Intercolonial Railway would be paid off, caused that measure to fall through in 1862.

10,000,000*l.* rather than that in war-time she should be invaded. This necessity might be still more strongly urged upon us by a threat from Canada, that if we refused to defend her to the utmost in our power she would repudiate her debts and join our enemies. It must not be supposed, however, that by refusing to encourage Canadians towards what the *Times* calls a retrogressive policy—that of wasting her substance upon useless fortifications—it is intended that she must be abandoned at once. The troops, it is true, might be withdrawn and our real power in the West strengthened by the operation. The garrisons of Canadian cities concentrated on some point open to our fleets at all seasons of the year were far more advantageously situated than they are at present. No amount of sympathy or sentiment should induce us to run counter to the simplest rules of strategy.

Canada has been hitherto discussed as impossible of defence.* Supposing, however, for the sake of argument that by the expenditure of a vast sum of money the province could be rendered secure from invasion, are the people prepared to incur the expense which

* Major Jervis, be it remembered, based all his calculations upon the fact that, in his opinion, a winter attack in force by the enemy would be impossible. Many military men are of a contrary opinion.

such a scheme must render necessary? The prospectus signed by the delegates at Quebec refers to no such expenditure.

The annual naval and military estimates are there restricted to the pitiful sum of 250,000*l.* a year, a sum little in excess of the present military expenses of the different provinces. The question of fortifying Montreal and Toronto has never been brought before the Canadian Parliament. Delegations have assured our Government that these cities will be fortified, and that is all.

Nothing has yet been done; nor is it unlikely that, were the pressure actually brought to bear upon the people and their taxes increased, the Government might be compelled to resign.* A reference to Mr. Russell's "Canada" shows the vast number of points which, in his opinion, must be defended. He mentions no less than nine cities, exclusive of Quebec, which require fortifications. The burden on the people were these works built would be intolerable. The policy of the people is, after all, a wiser one than that of their politicians. They refuse to struggle with

* Mr. McDonald thought that no Government could exist which would venture to recommend the raising of 50,000 partially trained militia.

geography and nature. Even Mr. Russell, who takes a sanguine view of Canadian affairs, can bring but poor testimony to the active efficiency of the Canadian volunteers. They have, it is true, been successful in guarding their frontiers from raids, *i.e.*, raids *from Canada into the United States.*

They showed laudable zeal in checking Southern refugees who proposed to rob American banks lying near the frontier.

"The recommendations of the Commissioners," he tells us, "were to *some extent* acted upon; and since the foregoing pages were written, the first fruits of the volunteer organisation were witnessed in the actual appearance on service of a number of companies which have been despatched to prevent the frontier of Canada from being made the base of offensive operations against the Northern States by Confederate partisans sheltered for the time under the British banner. These are but the advanced guard of the 80,000 men who have been ordered to hold themselves in readiness for active service." *

That an advanced guard of a few companies volunteering to perform ordinary police duties on the frontier is in itself laudable there can be no doubt,

* "Russell's Canada," p. 195.

but that it should be cited as a sign that Canadians are preparing to defend themselves in case of invasion shows, we cannot help thinking, the weakness of Mr. Russell's case.

The march of these companies from Quebec was heralded in the local papers with a pomp suitable to the departure of a vast army. The military genius of the nation was extolled to the utmost, whilst the 80,000 men, of which this force was the advanced guard, remains undrilled and the greater part of them unenrolled.

Whether Canada be naturally indefensible or not, before we guarantee her money, it is our duty to ourselves and her people that the popular feelings of the Canadians be properly sounded. The question, as was said above, has never been placed before them, "Are you prepared largely to increase your liabilities by an extensive system of fortifications and the construction of the Intercolonial Railway?" If they be not prepared to do so now, they would be in no better position for doing so were Confederation effected. Their debt would be lightened but by one-fifth by the addition of the Lower Provinces. Until this question be answered by the Canadian Parliament and people, Confederation must or should be impossible. If

Canada be not capable of self-defence, it were madness for the Lower Provinces to join their destinies with hers.

The late Duke of NEWCASTLE, writing to Lord MONCK about Canada, remarks:—"A country, however unjustly, suspected of inability or indisposition to provide for its own defence, does not, in the present state of America, offer a tempting field for investment in public funds or the outlay of private capital. Men question the stable condition of affairs in a land which is not competent to protect itself."*

If Canada, shortly after the *Trent* affair, when war was at any moment possible, when war with the United States divided promised every chance of success, provoked these words, and the instability of her affairs was such that she offered no tempting field for investment: does she now—the States re-united, and her volunteer force but slightly increased—offer a tempting field, not for the investment of capital, but the investment of the political existence of the Maritime Provinces?

Our duty towards Canada is plainly described thus by the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—

* Duke of Newcastle to Governor-General of Canada, August 20th, 1862.

"We may wish to dissolve the connection, we may be of opinion—that is for the benefit of the two countries—that it should be dissolved; but we cannot in common decency or kindness set ourselves to prove to Canada that she had better go, or to act shabbily towards her, in order that she may be irritated or disgusted into going. This much, however, we may do, and ought to do, and we conclude that Mr. CARDWELL will be very explicit and very prim on that head. Before we incur great expense, and enter into far-reaching and committing engagements, in order to protect and retain Canada, we must be quite certain that Canada desires strongly and deliberately to be retained. We must be satisfied that she clings to us not merely for the sake of the capital which she can induce us to expend on her behalf, or the loan which she wishes us to guarantee. We must not sink large sums of Imperial money to enrich a colony which either meditates separation, or which wants us to bribe her to remain." *

Until these questions are settled, the Lower Provinces must decline Confederation. Were Canada to join the United States, the interest of two or three of the most defensible Lower Provinces will remain with

* *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 26th, 1865.

the mother country. The emigration now swallowed up by Canada would fall to their share, and with the vast natural resources in their possession a prosperous future might be anticipated. If, on the contrary, Canada determines to remain with England, such proofs of a strong intention to do so, as the withdrawal of our troops would call forth and the enrolment of a large force of Canadians would be, must be given before the Lower Provinces could be justified in accepting the Confederation measure framed by some of the politicians of British North America.

CHAPTER V.

THE INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

By those unacquainted with the details of colonial politics, the political value of railways in British North America can hardly be appreciated. The capital secured by a ministry from a successful working of the railway "oracle" is unlimited. It is but natural that it should be so. In countries so sparsely settled as the North American provinces, no railway can be constructed without some measure of Government assistance. The power of granting this being vested in the ministry of the day, the result can easily be imagined. Any politician in power wishing to secure the adherence of two or three counties, hooks them with a railway fly, on which they are afterwards played by various succeeding administrations until the railway is completed. This bait may be of different varieties. It may be an actual pledge given of a railway to be constructed immediately. It

may be a survey of the counties interested, or it may be merely a suggestion that some day such and such a railway will be constructed. The small fly is generally used first. A minister hints probably in the House of Assembly that before long, if provincial prosperity increases, a railroad to so and so would conduce to an increased development of the resources of the country. Even the Opposition cannot contradict so flagrant a truism.

Time passes on, the minister secures his votes, until in the course of colonial politics he is turned out. The old Opposition then works the railway "oracle." They go a step further than their predecessors; they promise a railway to so and so. The old Government (present Opposition) cry out against extravagance, declare the province on the verge of ruin, and perhaps by the assistance of such a cry return to power. Again in office, railway extension is the order of the day. Circumstances have changed since the late Government retired. The provincial revenues have increased. The railroad can not only be afforded with ease, but is now essential to the welfare of the country. They go a step further than those who preceded them in office. They actually send out surveyors into the land, armed with poles,

chains, and theodolites, and so the farce goes on until the railway is actually finished. The great object of Oppositions is to prevent railways being constructed, that of Governments to pretend that they will shortly be commenced or completed. There is still another reason which suggests such a course of action to Oppositions. The strong sense of the country rendering the construction of railways sooner or later essential, every politician is anxious to gain the retrospective credit of having triumphantly carried his measure through. Therefore whilst in opposition he becomes obstructive, not because he is opposed to the principal of railway extension, but because he does not wish others to have the honour of completing the good work. When in office, on the contrary, besides the votes to be gained by railway promises and performances, he is anxious to secure for himself the solid good fame of having actually developed the internal resources of his native land. These remarks are founded on facts actually observed with regard to railway construction in Nova Scotia. It way be cited as an example that a gentleman * who three years ago, when in Opposition, euphoniously remarked, that

* Avard Longley, Esq., M.P.P., commissioner of railways.

"Rum and railways were the ruin of Nova Scotia," is now in office as commissioner of railways to a Government exceeding all its predecessors in railway prodigality.

It is not presumable that Nova Scotia is singular in the low tone of its railway morality. A standard Canadian work thus describes the state of affairs in Canada during the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway:—

"And here there was the additional evil of a political element. The contractor, wielding a gigantic scheme, which traversed almost every county of the province, virtually controlled the Government and the Legislature whilst the expenditure continued."*

That the colonial mind in general looks upon railway promises as especially fragile, there can be no doubt. That colonial politicians regard railways as fair fields for political intrigue is equally certain. The wiser portion of the populace, acknowledging railway immorality as a fact, politicians see no sin in playing upon the unwise, ignorant, and politically indolent members of society.

Seeing then that in two out of three provinces railway construction is freely used for purposes purely

* "Eighty Years' Progress:" Toronto, 1862, p. 210.

political, it is assuredly not unfair to assume that any larger scheme, involving the finances of the three provinces, cannot be expected to be absolutely innocent of such a taint. If the Grand Trunk in Canada and the various railways of Nova Scotia opened up a prosperous field for local political peccadilloes, is it unjust to surmise that when the politicians of the three provinces combine to construct a grand work (in which all are supposed to be equally interested), a large development of intrigue and political kleptomania may occur? Such a great scheme is the Intercolonial Railway. There may have been sanctions accorded by our Government—there may have been guarantees promised by our Government—questions of Imperial policy may have been mixed up in the matter. All these, however, would seem to be but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals to the gentlemen in whose hands the question really rests—the politicians of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

The first general congress of delegates from the several provinces met at Toronto in 1851: the last at Quebec in 1862. At both these conferences terms were agreed upon. After both these conferences the Intercolonial Railway was a more improbable fact than it had ever been before. Whether, as the in-

habitants of the Lower Provinces assert, Canada is the great "Shagbagger"* or not, matters little. The low ebb of railway morality in the British North American provinces makes Canada, when attacking Nova Scotia, or Nova Scotia New Brunswick, on railway matters, suggestive of the pot and kettle of the proverb.

To show, however, the state of public feeling,—to show that hard words do not break the thick skins of colonial politicians,—the following extract from a speech of the late Attorney-General of Nova Scotia, one of the most temperate and respectable of her ministers,† may not be out of place. Alluding to the Convention of 1862, from which the various members returned to their respective homes, outwardly settled as to the necessity of the immediate construction of the Intercolonial Railway, the honorable gentleman remarks:—

"What is the position of this question? Deputations from the three Governments meet at Quebec; they enter into an agreement, one that, as far as a province can be bound, solemnly bound all three.

* *Anglicè*—backer out of her engagements.

† The Hon. Adams Archibald, "Debates of House of Assembly," 1863.

Canada is just as morally bound by that agreement as if she had passed a statute. As respects the sinking fund, when the British Government said Canada might deposit it in her own debentures, there was an end to the objection on that ground. Therefore, to attempt to escape from the bargain on the ground that the British Government insisted on a sinking fund, was nothing more than to declare that she did not intend to pay at all, that, determined to repudiate the agreement solemnly entered into, she seized upon this as a pretext. To attempt to force this as a part of the basis was a breach of the compact entered into between Canada and the other two provinces, and even if Canada thought proper to shuffle out of her just obligations, &c. &c."

Doubtless recriminations equally pleasant were the order of the day at this period throughout the other portions of our North American possessions.

It would probably be unfair to suggest that as a mouse in a trap need fear no cat, so the political exigencies of the moment may at times render British North American statesmen callous to any dangers such as bankruptcy or debt, which are acknowledged as natural enemies by their less fortunate fellow-beings. Nor is it intended here to make allusion to the many

addled eggs laid by various conventions of British North American politicians on railway matters. The warmth of popular support (always loudly asserted by the delegates) being in reality absent, the eggs came to nothing, and the Intercolonial Railway remains uncommenced.

The question as it now stands alone requires consideration. We are requested to guarantee a large sum of money * to our colonies for a purpose which, as they assert, will tend to their defence, and which the more sanguine colonists imagine may be eventually developed into a paying concern. With regard to the guarantee, although Canadians scorn the idea that we run any risk by granting it, and are even loath to admit it to be a favour conferred upon them, it must be evident that we do run a certain risk in the opinion of financiers by the quotation of Canadian stock. This, after all, is the great test. Whilst English 3 per cents. are at 89, Canadian 6 per cents. are at 100. Supposing, however, that we run no risk by the operation, are we justified in urging the provinces to expend money on a line whose advantages appear uncertain at least, and are probably entirely chimerical? Our press alludes frequently to the

* Four millions sterling.

wasteful extravagance of Canadian statesmen, and our Government now urges expenditure upon a project which can be shown useless for military purposes, and can be expected to pay its working expenses only by the most sanguine.

In considering this subject, it will be well to divide it into two parts. Since the details of the Intercolonial Railway, or, indeed, of any trans-Atlantic railway, must be a dry and uninteresting study, they had best be examined methodically and in order. The prospects of the railway must be discussed, *first*, as a means of defence to Canada, should it be deemed wise to assist that province with Imperial troops in the case of invasion; And, *secondly*, as a speculation, as a means of opening up the country, and affording a favourite course for passenger and merchandise traffic.

Before going further, it is but fair that we conjure the reader to take up the map. Without such assistance it is absolutely impossible that the subject can be correctly appreciated. It is unfair to pile name upon distance and distance upon name, without affording a clue by which alone the question can be understood. It is unfair upon the writers for a reader to refuse the assistance afforded by the map.

A railway already exists between St. John's and Moncton. Quebec and Riviere du Loup are also connected by railways. It is to join the first line with the second at the last mentioned place that the Intercolonial Railway is proposed. No less than fifteen different routes have been suggested, the longest requiring the construction of 390 miles, and the shortest of 292 miles of railway to connect St. John's and the Grand Trunk at Riviere du Loup.* These various lines may be divided into three great groups. The frontier or shortest lines, objected to by our Government as useless for military purposes; the central lines, nearly as short as the last mentioned, but passing through a totally uninhabited district; and the North Shore lines, the longest of all, and originally surveyed by Major Robinson, R.E., in 1846 and 1847. These last, like the frontier lines, run through a settled district, and might command a fair amount of local traffic.

We will consider the Intercolonial Railway, first, as a means of military communication in winter between Great Britain and Canada.

In speaking of the shortest distance from the frontier at which the railway would be allowed by

* "Sandford Fleming's Report," p. 83.

military authorities, as serviceable for the passage of troops, Mr. Fleming remarks: *—

"I could not presume to express an opinion on the best military position for the railway, or even enter into the question of route in a purely military aspect at all; but in the absence of any specific instructions† or suggestions on the point, I found it necessary to be guided by some rule at the beginning and during the progress of the survey. For a number of miles west of Riviere du Loup, the Grand Trunk railway passes the north-western boundary of the State of Maine at a distance of scarcely thirty miles. This, at all events in a military aspect, is a precedent, and may suffice to establish the minimum distance allowable between the contemplated line and the north-east angle of the same State."

A reference to the map shows that the Grand Trunk Railway from Quebec to Riviere du Loup could not possibly have been constructed at a greater distance than thirty miles from the frontier, for the simple reason, that at this point the river St. Law-

* "Sandford Fleming's Report," p. 28.

† It seems somewhat strange that since the Intercolonial Railway is most strongly urged upon us by the Canadians as a military measure, their surveyor should have received no definite instructions as to the military requirements of the proposed line.

rence and the boundary-line are only that distance apart. This fact is therefore established, that create we a railway ever so well suited for military purposes to join St. John's and Riviere du Loup,—let it wind along the north shore, or pass through the unexplored wilds of the central forests,—after leaving Riviere du Loup, our line of communication must lie for many miles close to the frontier. Since it was settled by our Government that a line so placed was useless in New Brunswick, is it less so in Canada? The defence of Riviere du Loup not being the sole object in view, this objection to the Intercolonial line seems paramount. This great highway, of which fifteen surveys have been already made, may fail to carry our troops in safety even to Quebec.* Suppose, however, that point reached, the remainder of Canada cannot be much benefited. The line from Quebec

* It may be objected that the sparseness of the Maine population on the frontier would preclude all chance of attack on the Intercolonial Railway between Riviere du Loup and Quebec. This objection is partially covered by the decision of our Government, that in New Brunswick, where the frontier population is but little greater than that near the Grand Trunk Railway at Riviere du Loup, a frontier route would be inadvisable. Those unacquainted with the powers of a Maine lumberer will easily agree, that however mean the population on the frontier may be, men who can carry their food, and an axe besides, for six days, twenty, or even fifteen miles per diem, would not long leave in time of war our great line of communication untouched.

to Montreal passes within fifty miles of the Vermont frontier. It is actually connected with it by the Portland branch. Westward of Montreal the case becomes even worse. From Montreal to Kingston the railway fails to secure Mr. Sandford Fleming's necessary distance of thirty miles: it is actually on the frontier, exposed to raids of all kinds by the ice-bridge in winter, and by boats throughout the summer. If the Intercolonial road can only hope to carry our troops, in time of war, to Riviere du Loup, or perhaps by great good fortune to Quebec, it is at best only a strong road leading to a very weak one—the strong road having no object but communication with the weak one. No points on any of the proposed Intercolonial Railway routes have ever been suggested as desirable for defence; and Quebec itself, it has been shown, cannot with certainty be reinforced by means of the railway.

If this objection, however, does not make us pause before we quietly guarantee 4,000,000*l.* for a purpose at best but questionable, there are to be found in Mr. Sandford Fleming's report a few sentences which raise grave doubts as to whether, the former objection overruled, the Intercolonial Railway is, defensively considered, more than a broken reed. The

second great difficulty is *snow*. Of man's power over this obstacle Mr. Fleming takes a sanguine view. He considers it easily to be overcome. He suggests means by which, in his opinion, it can be conquered. In the course of these suggestions, however, he admits and makes public, disagreeable facts hitherto unknown in England. He reminds one of a doctor who, whilst assuring his patient that he can effect a ready cure, admits the existence in his patient's body of many organic disea[illegible]of which the latter was hitherto ignorant. The following passage speaks for itself:*—

"Snow-drifts, when they happen to occur, are serious obstacles to railway operations; they are found to be the cause of frequent interruptions to the regular running of trains, besides after the necessity of a heavy outlay. Every winter, in Lower Canada, *the trains are delayed for days at a time* on account of these drifts; the mails are in consequence stopped, and traffic is seriously interfered with."†

It is to be inferred from the above extract that unless some remedy be suggested our troops journeying by the Intercolonial line to Quebec are liable to be delayed for *days* in the wilderness. The picture of

* The italics are our own.

† "Sandford Fleming's Report," p. 101.

a battalion of Guards snowed up for a week on a desolate New Brunswick "barren," with a day's rations in their haversacks, would form a charming "pendent" to the Gunboats of 1812, constructed for the Canadian lakes, overweighted and rendered half useless by tanks ignorantly provided to supply the crew with fresh water.

Mr. Fleming suggests a remedy for this snow difficulty, which may or may not prove efficient. It must be remembered, however, that as a physician is loath to admit his inability to cure his patient—as a soldier is unwilling to declare impregnable a fortress he is demanded to attack—so also the Civil Engineer views hopefully the natural difficulties which beset his path. This is Mr. Fleming's plan:—

"Experience goes to prove that these snow-drifts only occur where the country is settled, and the surface denuded of its timber. In such places what are termed snow fences have been erected along the railway lines; but these, besides being only temporary expedients, *do not always prevent the line of communication* from being blocked up by snow. I am convinced that the only effectual method to prevent snow-drifts is to follow the plan which nature herself suggests. There are no snow-drifts in the woods;

the standing timber prevents the snow being moved by the wind after it falls. It seems only necessary, therefore, to leave a belt of woodland along the line of railway when it passes through the forest, and to *cultivate through cleared districts* a second growth of spruce or balsam trees to a width along the railway route sufficient to arrest the drifting snow on the outer side at a safe distance beyond the line of traffic. With such provision, *I believe*, there would be nothing to fear from drifts even in this high latitude."*

From this it appears that, supposing Mr. Fleming's experiment successful, we must wait many years before the railway can be pronounced free from all danger of snow-drifts. However safe it may be in the woods, in the cultivated districts we must wait until the balsams be grown up—five, ten, or fifteen years. Mr. Fleming omits, moreover, all mention of open plains other than those known as cleared districts. The barrens of New Brunswick are of great extent. Their soil is such that no tree will grow upon them. It were as hopeful a task to raise a plantation on Chatmoss as to guard the railway with trees when passing over a New Brunswick barren. Spruce trees planted in large pots might be made use of, or

* "Sandford Fleming's Report," p. 101.

the railway might be completely roofed over for many miles; but such arrangements, however much they might commend themselves to British American politicians, could hardly be seriously entertained by our Government.* The main objections, then, to the Intercolonial Railway as a military work, are these: It is useless, since, hopefully considered, it can merely connect a strong point with a long line of defence in itself intrinsically weak. Supposing even this weak line to be a strong one, the Intercolonial route, by reason of snow-drifts, and its close proximity to the frontier at Riviere du Loup, might totally fail to connect Canada with the seaboard.

If the Intercolonial Railway, viewed as a measure of military expediency, be likely to prove a failure, its prospects as a commercial speculation are if possible still more unpromising. A rival possessing every geographical advantage is already in the field. Since the earliest development of railways in the United States, the design of connecting the American lines with those of the Lower Provinces has attracted

* In the opinion of many engineers Mr. Fleming's suggestion of growing belts of trees along railways, even were that practicable in all parts of the line, is fallacious in the extreme. Since the wind must blow occasionally diagonally along the railway, drifts must often occur in every deep cutting. The great leading law of falling snow is to fill up hollows.

the attention of capitalists in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the New England States. It is this connecting railway, known as the European and North American line, already approved by the politicians of the Lower Provinces, partially constructed, and now in course of completion, which must prove a fruitful commercial rival to the Intercolonial Railway. Mr. Fleming, sanguine though he be, cannot conceal this fact. Alluding to the passenger traffic of the projected Intercolonial line, he remarks:*—

"The United States route by Bangor would intersect the Grand Trunk Railway at Danville station, twenty-eight miles out of Portland, and thus form an unbroken railway connection, having the same width of track from Halifax to Montreal, and all other parts of Canada. The distance from Halifax to Montreal by this route is estimated at 846 miles, while the distance by the frontier and central lines which form the *shortest connection* between Canada and the Bay of Fundy, averages 871 miles in length. Thus it is evident that the passenger traffic of the Intercolonial may, on any of these lines being constructed, be tapped near its root, and much of it drawn away."

* "Sandford Fleming's Report." p. 82.

Thus, construct the great line as we may, its rival has an advantage between Halifax and Montreal of twenty-five miles. When to this is added the disadvantages of possible delays by snow, it seems impossible that any large amount of patronage can fall to the proposed Intercolonial line. The European and North American railway will doubtless shortly be completed. "The construction of this link" (Mr. Fleming tells us) "is most warmly advocated in the State of Maine, and in the Province of New Brunswick, ... and the influences and agencies at work will, I am convinced, be instrumental in finishing this line of communication at no very distant day."

In Nova Scotia the progress of this railway is watched with interest. On the 4th of March, 1864, the Provincial Secretary of that province wrote thus :—

"I would be prepared to submit to the Legislature a proposal to grant a subvention of $80,000 per annum to facilitate the construction of the line from Truro to the border of Nova Scotia, provided arrangements were made to connect it with the railway in New Brunswick."*

* "Proceedings of House of Assembly, Nova Scotia," Appendix 7,

The first sod of the New Brunswick portion of this railway was turned in October, 1864, and the whole line will probably be in working order before the Intercolonial Railway is commenced. Fully alive to this objection, Mr. Fleming suggests a strange remedy.* He selects a harbour on the north shore of New Brunswick, which for vessels sailing on great circles is equidistant with Halifax from England. This harbour, known as Shippigan, useless in winter —the bay being frozen over—may, in Mr. Fleming's opinion, become a summer landing-place for Canadian mails and passengers. It is true a branch railway of forty-five miles will be necessary to connect Shippigan with the Intercolonial Railway. It is true that if the north shore route be adopted, which can alone communicate with Shippigan, all prospects of obtaining a stray passenger from Halifax to Canada in winter must vanish. As Mr. Fleming remarks :— "During a great part of winter, Halifax would be the point of connection between the steamers and the proposed railway; then the latter would unavoidably enter into competition with the United States lines." †

Letter of Provincial Secretary to President of European and North American Railway Company.

* "Sandford Fleming's Report," p. 93.

† *Ibid*, p. 97.

He moreover admits that the North Shore line is the least likely to command freight traffic. Thus the only railway by which a few through passengers might in summer be obtained, loses by its great length all chance of passengers in winter, and has no prospect of carrying freight; yet this is the only line on which Mr. Fleming expects to carry through passengers. The passenger-traffic on the Intercolonial Railway, it is to be feared, would be limited indeed.

As a means of conveyance for the produce of the great West, the prospects of the proposed line are equally unpropitious. A comparison of distances will show that railways already in operation must always prove successful rivals to the Intercolonial line. In the summer, the rivers being open the ports of the St. Lawrence are the natural points of shipment. In the winter the nearest port to the producing district will in all cases be selected. Whether the Reciprocity Treaty be abrogated or not matters little. Such an advantage as the through transport of Canadian produce—an advantage entirely on the side of the United States—is not likely long to remain neglected. A supposition that Canadian exporters would, from motives purely patriotic, employ the Intercolonial line to the detriment of their pockets, would be silly in

the extreme. The traffic, therefore, must flow through its natural course—the shortest route to the sea. St. John's and St. Andrew's, in New Brunswick, are the nearest ports open in winter for the shipment of Canadian produce transmitted by the Intercolonial Railway.

St. John's is distant from Montreal by this route 583 miles, from Toronto 913 miles. Portland is distant by American railways from Montreal 297 miles, and New York from Toronto 540 miles. St. Andrew's has an advantage over St. John's of 24 miles; that is to say, if a frontier intercolonial route was to be selected, the former would be only 24 miles nearer Montreal and Toronto than the latter. As a means of transit for Canadian goods, the Intercolonial Railway, whichever line be constructed, is unsuitable. As a certain means of railway communication in winter it is useless—its passenger traffic promises to be but small.

It is not then easy to perceive why fifteen surveys should have been made for a railway which must eventually prove a thorough failure. It is not easy to conceive the motive which for eighteen years had induced the North American provinces to appoint congresses, conventions, and deputations for the discussion of so unremunerative a subject. Our Govern-

ment has, it is true, urged the measure frequently as one of pressing military necessity.* It has urged the railway upon Canada as the first step towards her self-defence. It has demanded the line from Canadians as a proof of their desire to continue in alliance with us. It would probably be unfair to suggest that, urged upon her (erroneously as we think) as it was, the railway may have been employed as a salve to our Government for the non-performance of other works of self-defence. Fifteen surveys could hardly be as expensive as the fortification of Montreal—or so pressing upon the people as a general militia drill of fifteen days per annum.

To unravel the motives of Canadian politicians, however, is not our present purpose. Nor is it necessary to enlarge upon the great political crime which, by inviting Canada to increase the burden of her debt at this moment, we commit. As the *Times* justly remarks: †—"The present moment is, as we have often shown, the very last in which we should seek to carry embarrassment into Canadian finance. . . .

* How our Government ever arrived at the conclusion that a circuitous route, forming the circumference of a circle, of which the State of Maine may be said to be the centre, could be a work of military necessity it is difficult to conceive.

† *Times*, September 9th, 1865.

The Intercolonial Railway can do nothing but mock them with the prospect of a communication with the sea, which is sure to fail them just at the moment when it becomes most imperiously necessary for their preservation."

To prove that the crime of embarrassing Canadian finance would, if committed, fail in its results, has been the object of this chapter. If right and a saving of 4,000,000*l.* are on one side, wrong and a large expenditure on the other, our choice should not be difficult.*

* Since Major Jervis bases the defensibility of Canada on the supposition that no regular attack could be made on her in winter, it may be suggested that reinforcements from England should not be necessary during that season. The Intercolonial Railway would thus be, as a military measure, useless. If the Canadians are incapable of self-defence when no regular attack is made upon them, surely all the force we could spare for their assistance would, allied with such weakness, be insufficient to protect the frontier.

CHAPTER VI.

NOVA SCOTIA.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that were we promiscuously to push away from us the Lower Provinces of British North America, Imperial interests would not be advanced by the transaction.

On the contrary, it can be shown that certain of our maritime possessions are sources of future strength to England; that they belong to the class of colony essential to our maritime supremacy, and the protection of British trade. It can be shown that one at least among their number should be grouped with those dependencies held principally for Imperial purposes, and not alone, as Canada and others are, for the good of their own inhabitants.

If our policy of holding strong points and commanding positions in every quarter of the globe be not a folly, a *pied à terre* in North America is indispensable.

The days have gone by when territorial aggrandise-

ment was the dream of British statesmen. The protection of our commerce and the command of the seas is all that we now claim. Were Gibraltar necessary to us as a check to Spain—Malta as a point of vantage against France and the Mediterranean States—Aden, Hong-Kong, the Mauritius, and St. Helena as protecting points for our Eastern commerce against French, Dutch, and Spanish encroachments, it cannot be denied that a stronghold in North America is essential to our naval and commercial supremacy. In days gone by the possession of Malta and Gibraltar was more important to England than all our other colonies put together. In future times a fortress or a strong dependency on the other side of the Atlantic will be as essential to British power as ever were the two great fortresses of the Mediterranean.

Fifteen years hence we are likely to have but one great commercial rival—the United States. Should their present rate of increase continue, the population of those States will then approach 40,000,000. Though now young in the art of ship-building, rapid strides are yearly made towards the attainment of excellence in this line; nor can it be doubted that the energy which subjugated the South could in war time

provide a navy which might cope with ours on nearly equal terms. The war of 1812 is no criterion. The population of the States was then but 12,000,000, since then it has more than doubled. In 1812 the Americans had no army—their generals had no experience. All this has changed. The United States have proved their military power. Their naval strength, having had but few opportunities of making itself known, is not for this reason to be despised, their present navy being inferior only to those of England and France. If, then, we deem it probable that the United States must be our most dangerous rival in commerce, and on the high seas; if we admit that, from all we know of previous American history, the United States would, if occasion offered, enforce commercial privileges by arms, and attempt, if a reasonable chance of success appeared, to control the trading and international law of the world to their own advantage, the question arises, Is it our true policy to alienate from us every post and fortress which we possess on the other side of the Atlantic? Certainly not. Surely it were England's wise policy to strengthen herself in America as she has done elsewhere by a concentration of power on a strong position. Whether Canada remain with us or no

does not affect the question. If we wished to assist her we should by a concentration of force be in a better position for doing so, than with our men scattered along her lake shores. Should she ever choose to leave us, we are still strong in America, occupying a good position should any differences arise between England and the United States. From such a policy another great advantage must accrue. When we spent money in fortifying strong points we should feel satisfied that it was expended for ourselves and not for others.

We should be happier spending money on works which we intend to hold than in squandering it upon fortifications which may at any moment become the property of a seceding colony, whose decision to secede it would not be England's policy to contravene. We must resolve to hold some part or parts of the Lower Provinces for the general advantage of the Empire, and not alone for the mere pleasure of the colonists themselves. We must regard some of the Lower Provinces as belonging to the group of colonies useful to us for Imperial objects, and not, as Canada, a source of weakness rather than strength to the Empire at large. All the Lower Provinces are more or less capable of defence, but our wisest policy were to select

one amongst them as a stronghold by which such power of offence in America will remain in our hands as to guarantee the safety of all our trans-Atlantic dependencies.

Whether a compact union of the Lower Provinces on a permanent basis be effected or not matters little. Once strong in America, the future of the colonies held for other than Imperial purposes may be left to depend upon their inhabitants. Our business is to make England strong in the West that assistance may be given to colonies deserving of aid, and that British naval supremacy may exist on the other side of the Atlantic.

The colony to be selected must, therefore, possess such advantages for defensive and offensive purposes as will make it a suitable permanent depository of British power in America. The principal requirements for such a colony are these:—It must possess one or more good harbours; the rigour of its winter must not be such as to blockade, at any period of the year, these harbours with ice; and it must possess a short and easily defensible land frontier; if it be blessed with the further advantages of coal mines and iron mines so much the better. The three former conditions however are imperative. It is not necessary to

consider now the political tendencies of the different provinces: failing in the requirements above mentioned, they are unfitted for the position of a British stronghold in the West.

A very few remarks upon each province will suffice, since more can be learnt on the subject in five minutes by the map than could be taught in writing by twenty pages.

New Brunswick of all the Lower Provinces is certainly the least capable of defence. She possesses an unfortunately long land frontier, protected along its greater portion by no strong natural boundary. This frontier, already long enough, would be increased by a third should Canada ever join the United States. The manifest weakness of New Brunswick for purely imperial purposes is therefore apparent.

Whether it were wise to fortify New Brunswick for the New Brunswickers or not is quite another question. Hitherto this province has cost the mother country less than either Canada or Nova Scotia. She has fallen, so to speak, between two stools. She has had neither the importance of Nova Scotia as a naval and military station, nor the ceaseless importunity and wheedling power of Canada.

Many of the arguments adduced against the

scheme of Canadian defences, might be brought to bear with weight against any attempt to fortify New Brunswick. That by the expenditure of vast sums, the province could be held, is probable; but that a concentration of our power elsewhere would be more conducive to a successful issue, whether in peace or war, is equally probable. A long half-wooded frontier is but a poor field for the exercise of our strength. It is a weak position to take up, and the troops employed in guarding it might be far better employed in the defence of the natural strongholds which we possess, or in attacking the invaders on some vulnerable portion of their own territory. It must be remembered, moreover, that to create fortifications is to invite attack in case of war, so that before we build them a certainty of finding garrisons for our works were advisable. To create fortifications, the defence of which must cost much labour and loss of life with poor results, would be folly; but to create such works with a possibility of their falling some day, with our own sanction, into the hands of those who refused to assist us in their defence, would be more than folly.

If we do build permanent fortifications in British North America they must be built with the knowledge that we shall keep them, come what may. That this

is the principle on which our Government seems at length inclined to act, is proved by their readiness to spend 50,000*l.* yearly upon Quebec, provided a confederation of the provinces be effected. This sum was granted under the impression that the provinces united would be better able to repel aggressions on the part of the United States, and remain permanently allies, or under the protection, of Great Britain. There was an idea of permanency in the arrangement —an idea that by this vote the whole question was to be settled. The idea, fortunately, has not yet been developed into fact, and it is not improbable that any attempt to fortify New Brunswick would result, sooner or later, in the disappointment of its projectors.

New Brunswick, moreover, is deficient in harbour accommodation. The harbour of St. John's, the only one of note on the Atlantic seaboard, is totally unsuited to the reception of a large fleet. The ports on the Gulf of St. Lawrence are for many months in the year closed up by ice. Thus, in whatever way we look at the matter, New Brunswick cannot possibly be made our source of strength in British North America; she is deficient in harbours and encumbered with a long frontier.

Of Prince Edward's Island it is not necessary to say

much. So long as we command the seas, her insular position renders her safe from attack in summer whilst under British protection. The ice which surrounds her shore in winter protects her from invasion during that season. This ice, however, renders it impossible to make of Prince Edward's Island a strong military position. Our troops might remain shut up for four months in the year, their only means of egress being ice-boats, in which conveyances alone the broken masses of ice can be crossed. As a naval station it is needless to say that Prince Edward's Island is totally useless. The ice which would confine our troops in winter would prohibit for four or five months all approach of the British navy to her shores.

Newfoundland is dependant for support entirely upon its fisheries, and for any other purposes than those of a vast fishing station, is useless. The harbour of St. John's, though easily defensible, as indeed is the small peninsula of Avalon on which the town stands, is often during winter rendered useless by ice. It is probable that our rights of fishery would always be maintained. A couple of men of war on the station are always sufficient for our purposes. The interior of Newfoundland is unexplored; its climate is rigorous in the extreme, and its population thinly

scattered along an immense seaboard. It is not out of such materials as these that our stronghold in North America is to be constructed.

There remains then only Nova Scotia to be considered. This province alone fulfils the conditions which it was remarked at starting are necessary for Imperial purposes. Nova Scotia possesses excellent harbours, capable of accommodating the largest fleets at all seasons of the year. Her land frontier is short, and, short as it is, exceptionally easy of defence. The means of transport are extensive. No large tract of country remains unexplored. Fair roads traverse it in all directions. In mineral wealth, and that too of a nature most useful for defence, the province is excessively rich. Her coal mines are inexhaustible; and her iron ores of the highest value for manufacturing purposes.

In considering Nova Scotia as a district likely to be serviceable to England in the event of a war with the United States, a reference to the map is advisable. It will be seen that this portion of the old Acadia could be made to North America what Alderney is to France, Gibraltar to Spain, or Malta to the Mediterranean nations in general. Being almost insular, and jutting far out into the Atlantic, she

offers means of attack from her east and west shores on the United States, whilst a fleet from her north shore could readily command all entrances into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. For these purposes, three of her harbours offer peculiar facilities. Halifax, on the south-east coast; Annapolis basin, on the west coast; and Sydney harbour, on the north, are excellent. Halifax harbour, so far as natural advantages are concerned, has probably but few equals. Its total length is thirteen miles. The entrance is one mile in width, and protected by a work of considerable strength, situated on its southern shore. The harbour widens suddenly above the entrance; and when opposite the city of Halifax, three miles higher up, is about a mile and a half in width. Here, however, in mid-channel, as if placed by man for the purpose, lies a small island, the batteries on which, now in course of construction, rake all the sea approaches to the city. Opposite this again, on the further side of the harbour, stands Fort Clarence, an old work recently strengthened by all modern engineering improvements. Over the city itself stands a Citadel, commanding a large portion of the harbour and surrounding country. Two miles above the town, and one mile above the dockyard, the harbour narrows sud-

denly to a width of half a mile. It again expands, higher up, into a large basin, seven miles long by three or four in width; the depth of water throughout the whole being at all times sufficient for vessels of the largest draught. On the defences of Halifax, 80,000*l.* have been spent during the past two years by the Royal Engineer Department alone. Six new batteries have been built, or are now approaching completion.

The harbour of Annapolis (the old capital of Nova Scotia) situated on the Bay of Fundy, opposite the city of St. John's, New Brunswick, has a basin about twelve miles in length, varying from two to six miles in breadth. Its only entrance, known as Digby Gut, is a deep, narrow channel, one quarter of a mile across, and about one mile in length. There is a sufficient extent of deep water in this harbour to float the whole British navy, whilst the entrance itself has at no point less depth than fifteen fathoms. The peculiar advantages of the Annapolis basin are its situation, its great depth and extent, and its narrow entrance. Situated as it is, opposite St. John's and the harbours of Maine, its advantages are self-evident, should New Brunswick at any future time be occupied by an invading force; whilst, as matters now

stand, any operations against Portland would be greatly facilitated by advantages which the basin of Annapolis affords.

Sydney harbour, lying to the north of Cape Breton, is the great port of shipping for the coal districts in that part of the province. Its advantages of position are great, commanding, as it does, the southern entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is of great depth, and only frozen during that part of the year when the Gulf, being itself rendered impassable by ice, Sydney harbour, even if open, would be useless for offence.

There are many other excellent ports in Nova Scotia: Shelbourne, Pictou, Yarmouth, Louisbourg, &c. Thus, so far as harbour accommodation is concerned, Nova Scotia is most fortunately situated.

The land frontier of Nova Scotia, from Cumberland Basin to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, measures fifteen miles. The surrounding country is flat. Two small rivers run parallel to one another, and to the frontier, about three miles apart. A railway from Truro to Monckton is about to be constructed. This line will bring the frontier into railway communication with Halifax; and when the railways to Pictou and Annapolis are completed, the frontier will be in direct

railway communication with all parts of the province except its extreme eastern and western portions. It may suggest itself to some, that if Imperial policy require a stronghold in the west, it were better to retain one strong fort or position, and abandon the remainder of the country; thus, for instance, that it would be easier, in the event of war, to defend Halifax and leave the remainder of the country to be overrun by the enemy, than to keep the whole province free from invasion. There are three reasons to be urged against such an objection. In the first place, by keeping Halifax as a Gibraltar, we should deprive the province of its capital, and surround the city with an inimical population; secondly, we should deprive ourselves of the vast resources, both *personal* and material, of the province; thirdly, with the command of the sea, it were easier to defend fifteen straight miles of frontier than to protect the Halifax dockyard were the surrounding country in the hands of others. The lines around Portsmouth are far more than fifteen miles in circumference. The most important war *matériel*, wherein Nova Scotia abounds, is coal. Dr. Dawson, in his work upon Acadian Geology, thus described the Nova Scotian coal mines a few years ago :—

"The most important are the Albion Mines, in the county of Picton, where two seams of excellent coal occur of the enormous aggregate thickness of thirty-seven and twenty-two feet respectively, although of this total only about twenty-four and twelve feet can be said to be good coal."

109,607 tons of coal were raised from this one mine in 1858. The productive coal measures of Sydney in Cape Breton cover an area of 250 square miles. The aggregate workable thickness of good coal is twenty feet. The quantity of coal exported in 1856 was 120,668 chaldrons. In 1864, 244,175* chaldrons were exported to the United States alone. The coal mines of Nova Scotia are indeed only beginning to be developed. During the past two years several hundred thousand pounds of American capital have been invested in Cape Breton, and where a few years ago only one company was at work, five or six companies now reap large dividends from their investments.

In *personnel* Nova Scotia, as a small auxiliary, is valuable indeed. Whether its large militia could or could not use their rifles with success, the value of such a force cannot be over-estimated. Every Nova

* "Proceedings of House of Assembly, Nova Scotia," 1864.

Scotian can handle an axe. The teachings of the American War on the value of the axe, in a country comparatively under wood, are conclusive. The late Governor, Sir R. MacDonnell, when opening the House of Assembly, thus alluded to the militia of the province:—

"Much progress was made last year in the general enrolment of the militia force of the colony, which numbered upwards of 56,000 men, of whom nearly 42,000 turned out for inspection and drill. When the heavy direct tax paid by those men, and also by the volunteers, both in time and labour, is considered, we must all feel that the country owes them a special debt of gratitude."*

Forty-two thousand men actually mustered out of a population of three hundred and thirty thousand is, it must be confessed, a very fair proportion. Although it has not hitherto been necessary to establish in Nova Scotia any force resembling our Naval Reserve, the materials for such a force are ample. It was shown in an official report from the Governor of the province to the Colonial Secretary in 1861,† that

* "Proceedings of House of Assembly, Nova Scotia," 1864, p. 11.

† "Eighty Years' Progress of British North America:" Toronto, p. 693.

Nova Scotia then owned one-third as much tonnage as France, that she surpassed the Austrian Empire by 2400 vessels and 69,000 tons; that she owned 116,000 tons more than Belgium, and that at the same date only six of the United States of America exceeded Nova Scotia in tonnage, to wit,—Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Louisiana. The tonnage of Nova Scotia in 1853 was 189,083 tons; in 1861, 248,061 tons; in 1864, 364,864* tons: thus showing a steady increase in tonnage of about fifty per cent. every three years.

The staunch loyalty of Nova Scotians in general has already been commented upon. The *Times* correspondent in his letter from Halifax, published October 24th, 1865, admits that their loyalty is undeniable. He remarks:—

"If there be degrees of loyalty in the provinces, and Canada be taken as the positive, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia may rank as the comparative and superlative. There are in Canada many who talk secretly in favour of annexation to the United States, but no such persons exist in the Maritime Provinces."

It is true, he qualifies his remark with the sug-

* "Proceedings of House of Assembly," 1864, Appendix 2, p. 241.

gestion that if Nova Scotia is more loyal than New Brunswick, the fleet which pays the former an annual visit may be the cause of this extra loyalty.

New Brunswick, however, is more loyal than Canada, without a fleet and with but few Imperial troops. Is it not then possible that without the mighty influence of the fleet, Nova Scotians may be as loyal, or more so, than New Brunswickers? Because with the fleet Nova Scotia is very loyal, is no proof that without it she would be the reverse. New Brunswick has less connection with the United States than Canada, and although she has less Imperial money spent upon her, she is more loyal than Canada. Nova Scotia has still less connection with the States than New Brunswick: may it not then be assumed that even without the fleet she might be equally loyal with New Brunswick?—that the amount of common interests with the United States helps, in fact, to determine the ratio of loyalty in the different provinces. A great cause for this loyalty may also be found in the fact that whilst in 1764 the population of Nova Scotia was only 13,000, it was swelled in 1784 to 32,000, and of this increase it is asserted 20,000 were loyalists who gave up their all at the commencement of the great American struggle that

they might live in Nova Scotia under their beloved British flag.* It is not unnatural that this sudden doubling of the population by men who changed their abode for their loyalty, should have left its trace even on the present generation of Acadians.

These, then, are the prominent conditions of Nova Scotia (many of which are shared by the other Lower Colonies) at the present time:—Harbour accommodation *ad libitum*, a short frontier, coal to an extent unknown, a prosperous militia force, a large naval population constantly increasing, and the whole surmounted by a loyalty never once called in question. Whether it be wise to urge a country such as this (which moreover we may later in the world's history be obliged to hold by force) to become alienated from us by joining her destinies with those of a nation whose geographical and political conditions are incompatible with national stability, is a very grave question. That we were foolish to do so suddenly and without deep consideration admits of no question whatsoever.

* "Eighty Years' Progress," p. 677.

THE END.

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