

Now, Sir, the objections that I raise are objections to the provisions of the Organic Act, and I find it necessary, for the purposes of my argument, to turn to those provisions. I do not mean to detain the Council at unnecessary length, but as the question before us is one which concerns the future of this Colony for all time, I trust that I shall be excused if I dwell for a few moments upon these points.

If we come into Confederation, we come in, as I understand it, under this Organic Act; and it is on account of the overwhelming influence of Canada in the joint Legislature of the Dominion, as given by that Act, that I object to the general principle of the Confederation of the North American Provinces of Great Britain. I am told I am in error, that profound statesmen in Great Britain and in Canada have determined otherwise, and that Confederation, on the basis of the Organic Act of 1867, is the policy of Great Britain.

I regret, Sir, that I cannot be silenced by the weight of such authority. No statesmanship, no conclusion, is of any value except for the reasoning on which it is founded; and I am ready to rest the whole matter on simple argument and reason. All States large enough and populous enough to warrant such privileges, eagerly and passionately desire the power of self-government. It is the common passion of our race. Formerly, even now, in other places, it is British policy to give these powers; and as New South Wales has thrown off Victoria and Queensland, so would it appear to be reasonable to extend the principle to the British Provinces in North America, rather than to adopt a different policy, for the simple reason that it is in accordance with the instincts of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the just rights of man.

We want self-government, which means the protection of our own interests, and the establishment of our own welfare in our own way; the passing of our own Estimates in our own way; the selection of those who rule, and the subsequent meeting of our rulers, face to face, in open Council, that they may show us the results of their ruling. It means the imposition and collection of our own taxes, fostering our own industries, and the power of the purse. These are the elements of self-government, and they are reserved to the Dominion Government, and taken from the Provinces; hence my objections to the Organic Act. For these reasons I say that Confederation—or rather union—with Canada cannot be fair and equal, on account of the overwhelming influence of Canada in the Dominion Parliament, now and in the future; for it always must be so. Canada can extend, and will extend, and even of herself would be able to sway the destinies of the Dominion. And are we to accept this position because we are told that British statesmanship wills it? Statesmanship, Sir, is nothing more than very sound common sense put into practice—sound common sense, backed by a knowledge of mankind and of the subject-matter to which that statesmanship is applied. And, although it is not for me to depreciate the renown of my countrymen, it cannot be disguised that they have not unfrequently gone astray, and been forced to submit to the control of national interests and national will. It is not difficult to find instances of error in British statesmanship, as applied to Colonial affairs. The errors of British Statesmen, with a majority of the House of Commons and the British Nation to back them, cost Great Britain the thirteen United States. The errors of British Statesmen, with a majority of the House of Commons and the British Nation to back them, have inflicted wrongs upon Ireland, which are only now in process of removal; and the policy of British Statesmen, with the British Nation to back it, has created a difference which has gone far to alienate the affections of the Colonists of New Zealand.

In this question of Confederation it is impossible not to see the self-interest of Great Britain underlying the whole matter. England is alarmed at the extent of her Colonial possessions, and her obligations to protect them by sea and land. Of all her possessions, the Dominion of Canada is the most assailable; and, doubtless, Great Britain stands alarmed at the responsibility and cost of protecting so enormous a frontier. The question of Confederation is the question of every tax-paying Englishman, and whatever may be the *reasoning* put forth, the *motive* is economy and security to the tax-paying public of Great Britain. Confederation is, doubtless, of value to Great Britain, as establishing a counterpoise to the United States of America, and probably inducing the Dominion of Canada to ask for and obtain independence, and so relieve the Mother Country from the cost and duty of defending it. This is, I believe, the entire *statesmanship* of the measure—a statesmanship meritorious in English eyes—but, as I believe, fraught with extreme danger to British interests in this quarter of the globe.

Turning now to what may be called the argument in favour of Confederation, we have Lord Granville's despatch. Lord Granville, it must be admitted, has ably, gracefully, and