

plausibly put before us the supposed advantages of Confederation:—"Her Majesty's Government believe that a Legislature selected from an extended area, and representing a diversity of interests, was more likely to deal more comprehensively with large questions, and more impartially with small questions, and more conclusively with both, than is possible when controversies are carried on and decided upon in the comparatively narrow circle in which they arise. Questions of purely local interest would be more carefully and dispassionately considered when disengaged from the larger politics of the country, and at the same time would be more sagaciously considered by persons who have had this larger political education.

"Finally, they anticipate that the interests of every Province of British North America would be more advanced by enabling the wealth, credit, and intelligence of the whole to be brought to bear on every part, than by encouraging each in the contracted policy of taking care of itself, possibly at the expense of its neighbour."

This I understand to be the argument of the Colonial Office in favour of Confederation; and although I fully admit that it is well put, I believe that no argument is more fallacious. It is delicate ground for me to touch when I presume to differ from what comes from so able a man. On this point I wish to make myself distinctly understood. I do not profess to be a statesman or a politician, but as a lawyer of mature age, pretending to a fair share of common sense and a knowledge of human nature, I will venture to say, that if there is one passion more powerful in the minds of Colonists of Anglo-Saxon origin than another, it is the passion for self-government; in all English communities there is an ardent passion for self-government. Colonists here, as everywhere else, are animated by an intense desire to govern themselves in the way they think best; and to delegate that power to others is destructive of every feeling of self-respect and of social and political liberty.

It is not necessary for me to prove that this is the case, it is too notorious for comment; and as long as the spirit of liberty exists in the British Nation, we shall find that no one Province will submit to legislation at the hands of a Legislature in which its interests and welfare are overwhelmed and overborne. To secure submission to a Legislature such as that of the Dominion of Canada, where the majority of the Canadian Members make the law, uniformity of interest and feeling is necessary; and not only will the feeling of any separate Province be wounded by the consciousness that self-government is withheld from it, but on finding that its interests, or its feelings, are overwhelmed and subjected to the interests and feelings of a dominant portion, the sense of discontent and dissatisfaction will become universal and national, hence will ensue a condition of things most perilous to British interests generally.

The bond of union between Canada and the other Provinces bears no resemblance to the union between England and her Colonial Possessions. There is no natural love and original feeling of loyalty. The feeling of loyalty towards England is a feeling blind, instinctive, strong, born with us and impossible to be shaken off; and I believe it is impossible to transfer a feeling of loyalty and fealty at will. The connection between the Mother Country and a Colony—even a Crown Colony—is well understood in principle and in practice. The Mother Country guarantees the Colony from enemies abroad, and the entire work of inter-colonial management is, except in matters of prerogative, left to the Colonists themselves. The Crown pretends to no dictation, nor has it any interest at variance with the interests of the Colonists. Although in a Crown Colony the official element is supreme, it is well understood that it is to govern—and public opinion forces it to govern—according to the well-understood and well-established wishes of the Colony at large. The Government can not and dare not interfere except to prevent crude, irrational, or vicious legislation. There is no direct conflict between the Mother Country and a Colony in these days; but it cannot be supposed that any British Province will submit patiently to injustice at the hands of a Canadian Ministry or a Canadian House of Commons. If any scheme has been devised more likely than another to raise and keep alive local irritation it is, in my judgment, the scheme of Confederation on the basis of the Organic Act of 1867.

What is said by Lord Granville is true in theory, but practically it is opposed to human nature; and in endeavouring to carry out elaborate and elevated views Great Britain stands a fair chance of losing the whole of British North America.

Thus far I have treated of the general policy of the Organic Act.

With respect to the applicability of the scheme of Confederation to this Colony I have more special and particular grounds of objection. I consider such an union inexpedient on several grounds.