

North America to be united under a general legislature based upon the Federal principle.

This, sir, was the pledge given to this House and country by the present Government on its formation. It was pledged to introduce the Federative system into the Government of Canada, with special provisions for the incorporation into this Federation of the Maritime Provinces, and it was also pledged to send delegates to those provinces and invite them to join us in this Federation. (Hear, hear.) And yet we are told forsooth that these delegates, who were thus appointed in conformity with the pledge of the Government, were "a self-constituted junta,"—we were told that they had no authority for their action in the face of the distinct obligation resting upon the Government to send delegates to those provinces and to England with a view of bringing about this Confederation. No self-constituted junta were those delegates who framed these resolutions; but they met in accordance with a pledge given by this Government, and must be held to have been called together with the sanction of the Parliament of Canada, because Parliament gave the Government, formed to effect the Federation, its confidence. They met also with the sanction of the Imperial Government, as now appears from statements and despatches in possession of this House. (Hear, hear.) But coming now to the present aspect of the matter, I feel that this country has reason to be satisfied with a scheme of so practical a nature as that now under the consideration of the House. I believe that the plan of union proposed will be found to meet the exigencies of our local position, give latitude to local development, and due protection to local interests, and yet secure that general control which is essentially necessary for the proper government of a country placed under the dominion of the British Crown. (Hear, hear.) And while I thus look upon the plan, I desire to state emphatically and clearly that it is no new principle that the people of this country and the members of this House are asked to give their sanction to. The question of colonial union, in one shape or another, is one that has engaged the attention of high intellects and able statesmen in England; and I think I will be able to show to the House that the very principle we are now endeavoring to introduce as a principle of government in these British North American Provinces, is one that has received the sanction of eminent men in England, and more than that, the sanction of a solemn act of the Imperial Parliament.

(Hear, hear.) I will go back a few years, when the condition of the Australian colonies rendered it necessary for the statesmen of Great Britain to endeavor to find a practical solution of the difficulty of governing those great and growing dependencies of the British Crown. What was the practical mode adopted when events made it necessary that they should form a new Constitution for the more perfect government of those colonies? Why, the Imperial Government revived an old committee of the Privy Council, called the "Committee on Trade and Foreign Plantations," and referred the question to it, calling in to its aid, as new members of the committee, Lord CAMPBELL, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Sir JAMES STEPHEN and Sir EDWARD RYAN. The result of the deliberations of that committee was a report in which the eminent men who composed it recommended the formation of a general assembly, to which the control of the general affairs of the Australian colonies should be entrusted, with local governments having local jurisdiction and certain defined powers granted to them. I hold in my hands a series of letters on the colonial policy of England, addressed by Earl GREY to Lord JOHN RUSSELL, which contain the report of the committee of the Privy Council that I have referred to, and I find that the plan there suggested is analogous to the one we are now asked to give practical effect to in this country. (Hear, hear.) The proposition of the committee was that there should be a Governor General to administer the affairs of the Australian colonies, and that he should convene a body, to be called the General Assembly of Australia, on receiving a request to that effect from two or more of the Australian legislatures; and it was recommended that this General Assembly, so convened, should have the power to make laws respecting the imposition of duties on imports and exports, the post office, the formation of roads, canals and railways, and a variety of other subjects. The advantages of this plan were so manifest, as uniting those colonies together and securing for them a better and more satisfactory form of government than they had before enjoyed, that the report was at once adopted by the Privy Council, embodied in a bill and submitted to Parliament. The bill passed the House of Commons and reached the House of Lords; but while before that body the two clauses which introduced into the government of the Australian colonies the same system that in effect it is proposed to