

this great scheme is not one which ought to be factiously met. For if ever there was a plan submitted to any legislature which deserved to be treated with an avoidance of party feeling, it is this. (Hear, hear.) It is evident that in the House there are a large majority in favor of the plan, and while it is their duty to concede to the minority—what is the right of the minority—the opportunity of stating their objections to it, it is, on the other hand, an evidence of the strongest kind that the majority, in supporting this measure, believe they are doing the best for their country, and that it is a measure which meets the popular sanction and approval, when they avow by their own act their readiness to return to the people for their approval of the steps they have thought proper to take. (Hear, hear.) It is the duty of those who are in favor of the scheme—and I believe there are a very large majority who see in it advantages of the most substantial kind—I am firmly persuaded that it is a duty they owe to those who sent them to this House, it is a duty they owe to the country, it is a duty they owe to the great empire of which we form a part, to bring this scheme to a speedy consummation. I am glad, sir, in taking a retrospect of the three eventful years during which I have had a seat in this House, to reflect that on the first occasion I had the honor of addressing the House, in 1861, I declared myself in favor of an analogous scheme to that we are now discussing; that I then expressed myself in favor of a general government of the British North American Provinces, with separate local legislatures, in the following terms, when speaking of the question of representation by population:—

He had confidence that men would be found able to meet the question fairly and to come down with a measure satisfactory to the country. It might be that that measure would be one which would bring together the different provinces of British North America into a union, formed on such a basis as would give to the people of each province the right to manage their own internal affairs, while at the same time the whole should provide for the management of matters of common concern, so as to secure the consolidation of the Britannic power on this continent.

I have held this opinion ever since I have had the capacity of thinking of the destiny of this country, and I would beg to be allowed further to quote language I used in 1859. Reviewing at that time, as I have

done hurriedly to-night, the extent of our possessions, and the great advantages we would be able to obtain by the union now proposed to be carried into effect, I spoke as follows, in a lecture on the Hudson Bay and Pacific territory, delivered in Montreal:

With two powerful colonies on the Pacific, with another or more in the region between Canada and the Rocky Mountains, with a railway and a telegraph linking the Atlantic with the Pacific, and our inland and ocean channels of trade becoming a great thoroughfare of travel and of commerce, who can doubt of the reality and the accuracy of the vision which rises distinctly and clearly defined before us, as the great Britannic Empire of the North stands out in all its grandeur, and in all the brilliancy of its magnificent future! Some hard matter-of-fact thinker, some keen utilitarian, some plodding man of business, may point the finger of scorn at us and deem all this but an empty shadow—but the fleeting fantasy of a dreamer. Be it so. Time is a worker of miracles—ay, and of sober realities, too; but when we look east and west and north; when we cause the goodly band of the north-men from Acadia, and Canada, and the North-West, and the Columbia, and the Britain of the Pacific, to defile before us, who are the masters of so vast a territory, of a heritage of such surpassing value; and when we remember the rapid rise into greatness, as one of the powers of the earth, of the former American colonies, and look back over their progress, who can doubt of the future of these British Provinces, or of the entire and palpable reality of that vision which rises so grandly before us of this Great British Empire of the North—of that new English-speaking nation which will at one and no distant day people all this northern continent—a Russia, as has been well said, it may be, but yet an English Russia, with free institutions, with high civilization, and entire freedom of speech and thought—with its face to the south and its back to the pole, with its right and left resting on the Atlantic and the Pacific, and with the telegraph and the iron road connecting the two oceans?

(Applause.) Such, Mr. SPEAKER, is the vision which is present to myself and to many others who, like myself, whether in Upper or Lower Canada, are “to the manor born,” and whose all and whose destiny is here. I know and feel, and am assured that if the people of these British Provinces are but true to themselves, and if the statesmen of Britain now act aright their part in this great crisis of our national history, this vision will be realized. We will have the pride to belong to a great country still attached to the Crown of Great Britain, but in which, notwithstanding, we shall have entire freedom of action and the blessings of responsible