

March 29, 1871

nothing in the objection. As to the objection of the railway having to be constructed in ten years, British Columbia was to be taken into the Union, and the understanding was that the whole Dominion should be connected. The responsibility might be great, but in all agreements certain conditions were implied, which might operate to change the agreement. If the present prosperity continued, there was no reason to doubt the ability of the Government to construct the railway within ten years, but if circumstances should prevent that, what danger could ensue? He should certainly support the resolutions of the Government on the grounds he had stated.

Some years ago he had entertained doubts of the success of Confederation, but he was very glad to see how satisfactory the results had been. He thought the definitiveness of the proposition for the construction of the line, would obtain for it greater consideration and greater confidence on the part of English capitalists. He would not try to foreshadow the future, but there was every reason for hope. The member for Lotbinière had said that the increased responsibility would make Canada's debt equal to that of the United States, but the view was most erroneous, for while the Canadian line would open up a splendid country and consolidate the country, the Americans had only destroyed property and desolated homes without result.

**Mr. MILLS** would not have spoken but for the remarks of the member for St. John. That hon. gentleman entirely misapprehended the system of Government provided by the British North American Act. He disputed his reading of the constitution as affecting powers and duties of Canada in relation to the colonies to be admitted into the Union. He had contended the Indians should be embraced in framing the basis for representation. That had not, however, been done as regards the other Provinces. The Indians did not enter into the social bond, and could not stand on the same footing as the white population. The member for St. John argued that because the principle of representation by population had been violated in the treatment of Manitoba, it should be in the case of British Columbia, and he had stated representation by population was not the principle established by the constitution, but the Union Act plainly showed it was and the representation was to be altered every ten years in harmony with the growth of the country and population, and in a prescribed relation to the sixty-five members always to be possessed by Quebec.

In answer to the member for St. John, he contended that the phraseology of the Union Act proved that the terms applicable to the four Provinces of the Confederation as to representation, applied also to the Provinces after-admitted. The Union could be extended only on the federal principle, and the principle he now contended for governed his objections to the Manitoba Bill last year. He held now as before that the very principle of our constitution was violated in the terms we granted that

Province last year, that we had no authority to grant her representation beyond that to which by population she was entitled. So much for the precedent cited by that hon. gentleman. He did not believe British Columbia would complain of our altering terms before us in obedience to our reasonable wishes and interests. If she was prepared to accept reasonable terms he would not oppose her entrance into the Union. If she was not so prepared, it would simply show the time had not come for her admission.

As to the remark that we ought to be able to construct a railroad in less than ten years, and that the Americans constructed theirs in three years and a half, it was apparently forgotten that their railroads previously extended a thousand miles further west than ours, that they had thirty millions this side of the Rocky Mountains against our four, and had a large population on the Pacific coast and infinitely greater resources on both sides of the Rocky Mountains than ours. He would like to know how we could build it in ten years when at the present rate of progress, and with our adequate means and other advantages that Intercolonial would require seven years. At its rate of construction, it would take 37 years to build the Pacific Road. He was convinced we should not draw so largely upon the future, should not incur obligations we had not certainty of being able to meet. On this ground alone, were there no other objections to the resolutions, he would be disposed to oppose them. The geological survey of the country was an incident of the local possession and management of the lands, and it should be undertaken by the local authorities alone.

We had no power to enter upon this work, the proposal of which was another instance of irregular or illegal Acts we were asked to perform. He would oppose the resolutions and support the very proper amendment before the House.

**Hon. Mr. LANGEVIN** then proceeded to explain in French the proposals and policy of the Government on this subject, and to recite the circumstances that led to the submission of this scheme, dating back to the period of Confederation. He reminded the House that these terms had been accepted by the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on the understanding that they would not be altered by the Parliament of Canada. In reply to the hon. member for Sherbrooke and other gentlemen, he contended that the present terms were not less favourable to Canada than the former, because in the first instance the colony was to have four senators at Ottawa and eight Commoners, while now she was allowed but three of the former and six of the latter. With regard to the railway, he urged that there was no comparison between the Intercolonial and the Pacific road, because it would not be undertaken by the Government but by a company upon the basis of a liberal land grant and an annual payment of money within the means of Canada, and without augmenting its debt.