

April 1, 1871

assembled, the obligations of the country had been largely increased, and now all at once the whole debt of the country was to be doubled. Surely this was a serious matter, and even the Hon. Minister of Militia had termed it a "big job" though he had afterwards tried to make it a very little job. It was useless to say that the country would not be expected to accomplish impossibilities, and that no burden would be added to the people, for when they had entered into a compact, they must carry out their promise, and when they went to England to raise money they would find this obligation considered a charge on the credit of the country. Notwithstanding the glowing terms in which the grandeur of Confederation had been depicted, the fact still remained that the debt had first been increased fifty per cent and now it was sought to be doubled.

He maintained, however, that the measure of Confederation had been carried, not by the Government but in consequence of the loyal respect of the people for the policy of the Imperial Government which was known to favor the scheme, and now the Government was breaking away if not from Imperial policy at least from Imperial aid, in proposing to carry out the work of communication alone and unassisted. If it had been the duty and the policy of the Imperial Government to aid the construction of the Intercolonial Railway it was a hundred fold their duty and policy to aid the construction of the Pacific, and he would ask the Government for what reasons they had absolved the Imperial Government from all duties in the work of consolidating British power on this continent. He referred to rumours which he said had been greatly influenced by the presence of Capitalists and Contractors who were opposed to the Northern Pacific Railway, and who thought that if the Canadian Government would decide definitely to construct the Canadian line, it would operate strongly against the Northern Pacific, and said he could not but think that those rumours had gained weight by the utterance of the President of the Council that if the Canadian line was constructed the Northern Pacific would never get beyond Red River. That hon. gentleman had also urged as a reason for hurry in this matter, that if they did not hasten to accept the terms proposed, British Columbia might exact conditions still more difficult, but such an argument was absurd.

British Columbia was a Crown colony, and if it were really, the policy of the Imperial Government, to consolidate British power on this continent, though every man in that colony might be in favor of annexation, their power to bring about such a result would be as light as a feather, it would be as nothing. If ever the British possessions on this Continent should become part of the United States, it could only be at the cannon's mouth, and as the consequence of the total ruin and prostration of British power on this continent. The same reason for hurry had been urged in the discussion on Confederation, and he very much deprecated it as tending very much to unsettle the minds of the people.

These great questions should be discussed solely on their merits without the fulmination of insincerities in regard to alternatives that might ensue in case of the scheme being rejected. He had no doubt that many, hon. gentleman, had been writing to their constituents

speaking of the wonderful benefits of Confederation as evinced in their being no longer a deficiency in the revenue, but a surplus of two millions, and he could not but commiserate them in having now to write that that surplus of two millions had disappeared to be replaced by a debt of one hundred millions.

Mr. RYMAL had hoped that the Government would have been forced to explain in what way the money for the railway was to be raised. He ventured to say that the Minister of Finance was not properly performing the functions of his office, in failing to explain fully the financial aspect of the matter. He feared nothing he could say would change one single vote, but he was convinced that if the question had been one of policy and not of party, the resolutions would never have been carried. Richelieu had said that many persons who, as private members might be saved, were in great danger of being damned for having wandered into public life, and if Richelieu had lived in these days and uttered those words, he (Mr. Rymal) would have been quite sure that his eyes were fixed on the gentlemen of the Canadian Government.

Mr. THOMPSON (Ontario North) desired to explain why he should support the amendment, which was because no explanation had even been attempted as to how so large a debt as that proposed could be incurred without crippling most seriously the resources of the country.

Mr. MACKENZIE'S amendment was then put with the following result: Yeas, 68; Nays, 86.

On the amendment being declared lost,

Hon. Sir A.T. GALT rose and said, it might be considered that the address was practically carried, but he desired before the final passage, to place on record an explanation of the terms under which the address was understood to be adopted. The Government had stated as a reason why these terms should be accepted, that it was not their intention to undertake the whole cost of the railway out of the money reserves of the Dominion, but that they proposed to do it through the intervention of companies to whom they would be prepared to give subsidies of land and money, and further that this was the understanding between themselves and the delegates from British Columbia. He therefore moved: That the word "now" be left out, and the words "on Monday next, and that meantime it be Resolved, That in accepting the terms of Union with *British Columbia*, this House understands that the engagement for the construction of the *Pacific* Railroad within ten years is subject to the understanding had between the Government of the Dominion and the Commissioners from *British Columbia* that the said Railroad should be constructed through the medium of private Companies, receiving subsidies in money and land, and that it was not intended to pledge the Dominion beyond the application of its money and resources to the loyal and earnest prosecution of the work, without entailing undue and excessive burdens upon the people."