

of every honorable member of this House, that some fifteen years since a movement was set on foot in Montreal, which had as its avowed object the severance of Canada from its connection with England, and its annexation to the United States. The gentlemen who inaugurated that movement were men of influence and high standing in the country, and some of them, as we all know, now occupy prominent positions in this House; they claimed then, as they do now, to be good and loyal British subjects, and yet they deliberately framed a document to which they attached their signatures, in which they prayed their Sovereign to allow this province to withdraw from its connection with England, and attach itself to the United States. Sir, the framers of the document to which I refer—the *Annexation Manifesto*—were not animated by a rebellious feeling against the Mother Country, but by feelings of loyalty to the interests of this country; their arguments were logical, and founded upon those material considerations which, after all, do exercise, and must continue to exert a more powerful influence over the minds of intelligent men in the nineteenth century, than any mere sentiment, or preference for any particular form of government; and sir, we all know that but a short time after the publication of the annexation manifesto, a new era dawned upon the country. The Grand Trunk Railway and other important public works were inaugurated. British capital flowed into the province in copious streams, the pockets of the annexationists were replenished, and their loyalty reëstablished, upon a basis which has lasted ever since. The reciprocity, too, contributed largely to the removal of the depression which engendered the annexation movement; and under the operation of that treaty, the material interests of the country have prospered to a degree that will only be fully appreciated when we have been deprived of its advantages. Sir, no conceivable state of things would have induced me to become a party to that movement in favor of annexation, but I am free to confess that the arguments advanced by the framers of the document to which I have referred were sound and logical—regarding them from a material point of view; and if they were so at that time, why should they not be equally so now? For the last ten years, we have enjoyed all the advantages of free intercourse and free trade with our powerful neighbors

of the United States. We are now in danger of being deprived of both—and if we are, what will be the condition of this country three years hence? Shall we not be reduced to a state more disastrous to our agricultural and other important interests, than we have yet experienced? And am I wrong, sir, in assuming that similar causes would once more produce the same effects? It is all very well for hon. gentlemen to say “No, no,” but I maintain that I am right; and, Mr. SPEAKER, it is our duty to look the existing state of things in the face. The impulses of mankind have been the same in all ages. We cannot change human nature, nor make men honest or disinterested, by act of Parliament. But, sir, I have only referred to the past in the hope that the recollection of the events and the state of things to which I have alluded, may have some influence upon the minds of hon. gentlemen—may, perhaps, induce some modification in the course of even a single member, who has hitherto been prejudiced against the scheme of union brought down by the Government. That we have arrived at a critical period in the history of this continent, is universally admitted. Events of the most momentous character are transpiring upon our borders, and I regret to say there exists towards us among our republican neighbors a deep-rooted feeling of hostility. Occurrences have taken place during the progress of the war which have tended, step by step, to intensify that feeling, which has displayed itself in the stoppage of unrestricted intercourse, and the threatened abrogation of the treaty of reciprocal free trade. In view of this state of things, Mr. SPEAKER, if we wish either to continue our connection with England or to maintain a separate national existence of our own, it is our duty to devise some means by which we shall be enabled at all seasons to obtain access to the seaboard through our own territory; to strengthen ourselves numerically; to increase our wealth materially, and to add to our importance territorially. All these results, Mr. SPEAKER, may, in my opinion, be obtained by the union now proposed. Sir, it is because I entertain this opinion that I am prepared to accept the proposition under consideration without criticising its details. If I were disposed to enter into details, I would most earnestly object to that part of the project which relates to the development of the North-West, and the