

It is clear that the moment the colonies manifest a disposition to separate from the parent state, that moment will the connection be severed. There will be no disposition on the part of England to force us to remain, while on the other hand, the greatest statesmen of the parent country have affirmed in unmistakable terms that if the Colonies wish to be loyal, the power of old England will be used to protect them from aggression, all they ask is to put ourselves in a position to make our defence more easy.

I have heard it stated over and over again that England may forsake Canada and retain Nova Scotia. This I consider a perfect fallacy, and I defy anybody to produce proof in corroboration of such an idea, either from documents emanating from any English statesman, or from any speech delivered by any public man in Parliament. But even supposing it were true, what position, I would ask, would Nova Scotia be placed in? It would not be the first time that she has been the battle ground of two great nations. When Canada and Cape Breton were French, and the rest of North America English, Nova Scotia was the arena upon which the struggles of these great powers in this contest took place—struggles which were continued till the extinction of French power in these Colonies. Surely, no one would desire to see that state of things re-enacted; and yet, if the idea of the abandonment of Canada were realized, we would be in even a worse position than we were in during the contest I have alluded to. But such an idea is absurd. The moment that the bond of connection between Canada and the Mother Country is severed, that moment we also cease to be a possession of the British Crown. Whether united with Canada by Confederation or not, we are bound together by a common fate and a common interest, and we must stand or fall together. There is one point that I intend to advert to for a moment, and that is to shew the reason why Great Britain has a right to dictate to us the method of our defence. No other such frontier as that which divides Canada from the United States exists between two great countries. In its length it is unlike any other,—and there is another peculiarity about it, that whilst the frontier of most other countries is defended by those who live behind it—in the case of Canada alone part of the forces which defend it has to be brought from some three or four thousand miles away—while the great centres of population of the assailing force are at our doors.—Therefore, I think, if Great Britain is obliged to defend a frontier so extensive as this, she has a right to give some advice, and we have a right to listen to her advice as to the course we ought to take, and the attitude we ought to adopt on the question of defence.

It has been asserted by some that the temptation to the United States to take possession of Canada is greater than against Nova Scotia.—I am rather inclined to think that the temptation is the other way. Let us look for a moment at the character of the two countries. There is no doubt that Canada in her agricultural resources, is a great country—that her extent and value are enormous; but the Western States are largely of the same character. The prairies of Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, afford ample room for the settlement of the

surplus population of the United States for a long time to come, and Canada could give her nothing in this respect that she does not already possess.

But, when we turn to Nova Scotia, we find she possesses a source of inexhaustible wealth not to be found along the whole seaboard of the United States. We find clustered along the coast large centres of population, engaged in arts and manufactures, for whom warmth and light have to be provided, while the material for warming and lighting them has to be sought for abroad. We find this material supplied in in exhaustible quantities by a country just at their doors, separated from them only by a political line. We find their comfort and their commerce dependent largely upon this little colony, and if their public men look at it as their private men look at it, (who have already come down and peaceably acquired a large interest in our coal fields, with a shrewd eye to the future,) I think that so far as temptations for conquest are concerned, the coal fields of Cape Breton are as likely to be coveted, as the fields and the plains of Canada.

There is another matter too, which should exercise some influence upon the public men of the United States—we happen to possess a population of some 20,000 men, engaged in the fisheries and navigation. To a country desirous of extending her naval power what greater inducement could be held out than the prospect of adding 20,000 sailors to her navy? While, therefore, the possession of that number of men in time of peace when engaged in the prosecution of this valuable branch of industry, is most important to any country. Any one who knows how Northern commerce has been swept off the sea by a few Southern vessels can understand how we should suffer if the dogs of war were let loose upon the 8000 vessels which constitute our marine, and upon whose safety and earnings depends so much of the benefit and prosperity of our people. When the calamity of war does come we need not flatter ourselves either that it will not fall upon us, or that if it does fall on us, that we shall be less sufferers than our neighbors. The hon. Pro. Sec. had referred to another subject which had always largely entered into the consideration of the question—the construction of the Intercolonial Railroad. I appeal to those who have always attached great importance to the completion of that work whether there ever was a time when its most sanguine advocates could have anticipated that it would be accomplished upon terms so advantageous to the Province, as those now within our reach. Surely if there should be any weakness in the other arguments in favor of Union, the prospect of the immediate realization of this great enterprise is one which ought to have great weight. The advantages that Nova Scotia would derive from the completion of this work have been so often dilated upon that I do not consider it necessary to refer to them at the present moment further than to say that with Nova Scotia, the great forefront of the continent, behind us, with Halifax, the great entrepot of the markets of the far West—with steamers running—not fortnightly—but daily to Europe—with the mail communication not only of our own colonies but of the United States passing over our soil—with all the commercial and material