**Bilingual Committee – Canadian Confederation**

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TOPIC 1: Institutional Design and Regional Diversity

Regional diversity is a topic that is very important in the foundation of our society if we hope to one day become a country known for its acceptance and appreciation of other cultures. We would be a hypocritical society if we were to welcome international immigrants whilst neglecting the large French population that already exists within Canada and not giving them equal opportunity to have a say in the matters of the united province. In order to support regional diversity, we must make sure that people from all stretches of Canada can voice their opinion to build a country that favours all. Giving complete power to a federal union would only lead to a feeling of unimportance amongst those who are under-represented, causing political unrest amongst Canadians. Through a unitary state, the provinces could pass their own laws to act in the best interest of their people and ensure that no population goes unheard. Should a legislative union with representation by population be established, all cultural groups could make decisions to benefit themselves, without any group being short changed. These groups could work together to solve issues pertaining to the united province while still being able to deal with their own affairs separately and providing them with independence. In order for a cohesive society to emerge, this plan must reach to include all provinces, including the Maritimes, *if and only if* the terms are fair. Without representation within the union, the people of the Maritimes would be in a situation of far less political power compared to the unified people of Canada. Joining together would allow for their interests to be heard; however, this would be futile if their opinions were to be considered less important than those of Canada East and West as the populations are quite culturally different (Rawlyk, 2006, para. 5). No province should benefit at the expense of another, so it must be made clear how Confederation will truly be a positive change for all citizens. All provinces must also be offered fair financial terms should they join together. Unless the current financial terms are changed and the benefits of Nova Scotia uniting with the rest of the provinces are made explicit, I cannot and will not support Confederation for the sake of my people. In terms of power within this unified society, I believe executive power should remain in the Governor General; however, there should be requirements regarding diversity so the executive council can be a more true representation of Canada as a whole (Magnet, 2013, para. 6). Legislative authority should also remain functioning as bicameral institutions within each colony, allowing them to pass their own laws in the best interest of their citizens, without requiring a consensus from people who are not involved or affected by the matter at hand (Makarenko, 2010, para. 2). Current judicial authority rests predominantly within British North America itself, unless a case should exhaust appeals In colonial courts (Farr, 2006, para. 1). Since this would still allow provinces to settle their own judicial cases, mistrials due to prejudice or under-representation would not be an issue and I believe it should remain the way it is currently set up. As a large portion of those living in Canada are French-speaking, equal language rights should be afforded for both the French and the English (Kalbach, 2006, para. 6). This diminishes the idea that the British are superior within Canada and would allow francophone populations to feel a greater sense of importance and belonging within the country. People of all cultures need to be shown that Canada is an accepting country that will provide rights for all of its citizens, despite race, religion, gender, etc.

TOPIC 2: Canada – A Staple Economy?

British North America is known for its abundant natural resources which play a major role in the economy of the colony (Kalbach, 2006, para. 27). As much as the implementation of a free trade agreement with the United States could benefit Canadians, we must consider the price we are paying and what is on the line should we make a deal. The Americans will not agree to the Reciprocity Treaty unless they are granted fishing rights in Canadian waters, something we should not be so quick to give away (Masters, 2013, para. 3). There have already been conflicts with Americans within our waters so we must make it clear that we are not to be stepped on and that we will stand our ground rather than give in right away (Winks, 2006, para. 1). Either the Americans will settle for the free trade agreement on its own or receive nothing at all. Continuing to trade predominantly with Britain has worked thus far and I see no issues. It would be selfish and nonsensical of Britain to go ahead with such an agreement without considering its possible repercussions for the Maritimes. The Maritimes are often short changed because they differ in many ways from Canada West and East which have a larger political and economic influence. It is important that the colonies work together and assess the situation in all provinces that would be affected before making decisions as well as be flexible because there are often opposing beliefs between different groups of people. The Red River Colony, for example, is something that would have a very minimal effect on the people in the Maritimes but could greatly affect those in other provinces (Bumsted, 2013, para. 1). Trade partners; however, would be important to all provinces and a railway system would be very helpful in transporting goods throughout British North America (Marsh, 2009, para. 13).

TOPIC 3: Foreign Policy and Protecting our Borders

British North America has its roots in Great Britain and should support Britain in its military dealings. It cannot; however, rely solely of the aid of Britain when conflicts arise in North America. It must form its own strong militia to protect the colony that is paid for equally by all Canadians and which is representative of the beliefs of the citizens. It is imperative that all of the colonies unite and agree on the issues at hand as well as understand each other in order to create the strongest militia possible. Canada is weak when provinces act alone and this has been the source of several international conflicts, for example, the Chesapeake Affair which could have ended much worse than it did and put the lives of Nova Scotians at risk (US Civil War, 2013, para. 6). We must also keep in consideration how the Aboriginal peoples of North America will be affected. Given that the land was originally theirs, we cannot step all over them without expecting any repercussions. We should be working together with the Natives and acknowledging their accomplishments. To maintain good terms with these people, representatives should be appointed that can work with the government of the province and delegate the views of their tribes. If we can create a partnership with the Aboriginals, we can make fair deals regarding expansion westward on their land.

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