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THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

An Independent Journal, aiming to be JUST, IMPARTIAL, RELIABLE, NEWSY, seeking at all times to further the best interests of the people and Province, and recognized therefore as

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THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

SATURDAY MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1905

MARITIME UNION.

(Continued.)

In a preceding article we have sketched the outline of a Government and Parliament for Acadia, to follow the union of the three Maritime Provinces. We have pointed out as fairly as we could the position the Island would hold with ten members in a House of 80, and one department of the Government among seven assumed departments. That it would involve a surrender of the control of our local affairs is apparent. But there might be compensation in other ways yet to be considered. Of that we shall speak later.

Of course, a prime object would be to save money if we can by the union. But we must have a new capital. It must in the nature of things, be somewhere on the Mainland. It must be fixed either by the new constitution or left to the new Legislature to determine. If left to the Legislature, in which Nova Scotia will of necessity have a majority of members, we know where the new capital would be placed. We assume that New Brunswick

would not consent to Halifax being selected. Fredericton or St. John are equally out of the question. Sackville or Amherst would be indicated as central points. The selection of either would involve the construction of new Parliament buildings and departmental offices.

These, if made suitable to the wants and requirements of Acadia and its dignity as a great Province could hardly cost less than three quarters of a million dollars. And of course the money for this large capital expenditure must be borrowed and added to the debt. There would also be a large loss on the present parliamentary and Government buildings at Halifax, Fredericton, and Charlottetown, which are not well adapted to other uses. There would also be the necessity of providing a residence for the Governor of Acadia at the new capital, and there would be the removal of the provincial civil service officials from Halifax, Fredericton and Charlottetown.

The bringing together of three sets of provincial government officials would involve new appointments, which the Mainland Provinces would control. A number of those at present in office would be of necessity retired or dismissed. Almost inevitably they would be pensioned, and a new charge on the revenues would be thus established. In the light of all these considerations, the cost of a new capital, higher salary for ministers, higher indemnity for members, increased salaries for officials and some inevitable pensions, it seems difficult to calculate upon much if any saving to be effected by the proposed union.

But there are other considerations to be taken into account. The public debts of the three Provinces must be consolidated. The other Provinces, notwithstanding the rich mines of Nova Scotia and the fine timber lands of New Brunswick have run quite heavily into debt. We have a small debt in gross but it is offset by an amount standing to our credit at Ottawa. The Statistical Year Book of Canada for 1904 gives Nova Scotia a net debt of \$4,446,701, or \$9.01 per head and New Brunswick a net debt of \$3,415,631, or \$10.21 per head, and the Island no net debt at all.

Of course the debt ought to be equalised by some fair arrangement at first, and the Island should receive due credit for its favorable financial position. How this could be effected in a legislative union we do not know but Acadia would set out with a provincial debt of about eight millions of dollars or nine dollars per head. And what about the future? The two mainland Provinces have not the same ideas of economy that we have. They do not hesitate to borrow money and expend it with a lavish hand. They have paid out large sums in subsidies to railways which do not pay the cost of operating, several of which periodically suspend operations in the winter and often for much longer periods. In the union it would be they and not we who would set the pace in expenditure.

Again their methods of supporting public services are altogether different from ours. They have county councils; we have not. With them the school districts and the county councils pay the greater part of the cost of education. With us the school system is supported almost entirely by the provincial Government. As a consequence the former pays three or four times as much as an Island farmer pays on a property of like value. Again, the poor are there a local charge. With us the poor are supported by the Government. In the union we would be expected to conform to their methods or to convince them that ours are better.

We have now free trade with the other provinces, a common control for our

postal, customs, inland revenue, militia and other general public services. Only local affairs remain within the provincial jurisdictions. Would it not be better for us and for all that local control shall be retained? How can Nova Scotia gain by admitting New Brunswick and the Island to share in the control of her mines? How can it profit New Brunswick to hand over to Nova Scotia the practical control of her timber land? And how can the Island hope to gain by transferring to the absolute control of the larger provinces our schools, roads, bridges and ferries and the appointment to every provincial office. We shall return to the subject.

A Regina despatch of the 25th says:—With F. W. G. Haultain as leader and with provincial rights as the chief plank to their platform, the Conservatives will go into the fight at Saskatchewan. After a short and sharp discussion this course was resolved upon at the convention held here. At the urgent request of Haultain strict Dominion party lines were dropped. It was also decided to continue opposition to the educational clause of the autonomy bill and to carry the legal aspect of the question to the Privy Council. Organization work will now proceed and it is rumored that Haultain and Water Scott, the Liberal leader, may face each other in the riding of South Qu'Appelle. It is understood that both have been invited to do so.

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