

STEAM COMMUNICATION WITH THE MAINLAND.

The Subject Discussed. Our Legislators Unanimous ON THE MAIN POINT

Determined to Press for the Fulfillment of the Terms of Union.

The Delegates Complimented On all Sides.

(Summary report of last night's Debate in House of Assembly.)

In moving the order of the day, Hon. Mr. Gordon stated that he would like to make a few remarks with reference to the mission of the delegates. The first point he would notice was that two members of the Dominion Cabinet had endeavored to impress upon the Imperial Government that this Island had nothing to complain of as everything that could reasonably be done had been done to carry out the Terms of Union.

He was of opinion that the delegates deserve the best thanks of the Province for the able manner in which they had dealt with the statistical part of the negotiations. It was a miracle to him (Mr. G.) how they had been in such a short time so ably drawn up with the information at hand.

Whereas, This House has had under consideration a despatch dated 30th March, 1886, from the Right Honorable Earl Granville, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, to His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada, in response to a Joint Address to Her Majesty the Queen, adopted by the Legislative Council and House of Assembly last session, on the subject of the non-fulfillment by Canada of that part of the Terms of Confederation by which the Dominion undertook to provide and maintain efficient steam service between winter and summer between this Island and the mainland, the report of the Privy Council of Canada on the said address, the answer of Messrs. Sullivan and Ferguson, delegates from the Government of this Province to the Imperial Government in support of the case of Prince Edward Island, the reply of Sir Charles Tupper, High Commissioner for Canada, to the said answer, and the rejoinder of the said delegates, and other papers on the subject.

And Whereas, The Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies has been pleased to say that it would give him "much satisfaction if, by the exercise of any friendly offices which he could tender, he should be able to contribute to the settlement of a question in which the Provincial Government were so much interested. His Lordship has also stated that the expectations of this Province, in regard to the establishment of a constant and efficient communication with the Mainland, have not been fulfilled; and that as there seems to be reason for doubting whether any really satisfactory communication by steamships can be regularly maintained all the year round, it is made all the more important that the proposed metallic subway should receive a full and, if feasible, favorable consideration on the part of the Government of the Dominion. His Lordship has further observed that "it would afford great credit on the Dominion Government if, after connecting British Columbia with the Eastern Provinces by the Canadian Pacific Railway, it should now be able to complete its system of railway communication by an extension to Prince Edward Island."

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this House that the Government of this Province should insist upon the Terms of Confederation in the particular referred to being carried out by the Dominion, and that in the event of its being demonstrated that fulfillment by steam navigation is impossible, and if Federal Government fail to construct such a work as will redress Canada's pledge and agreement under the articles of Confederation, then that a sufficient consideration in lieu thereof be secured to this Province, also that the payment by Canada of compensation for the loss sustained by the Island owing to the past default of the Dominion in regard to this service be strenuously pressed upon the Federal Government.

Mr. BENTLEY, in seconding the resolution said that it was well known that nothing had been done towards securing the fulfillment of the Terms of Union until the present Government came into power. Since that time not merely once or twice, but on different occasions the matter has been brought to the notice of the Dominion Government by the present Administration. Neither the late Government, led by Mr. McKenzie, nor the present Government led by Sir John, has done justice to the Island in this matter; but both have ignored our claims. Whatever small amount has been done towards improving the crossing to the Mainland, the present Government should get credit for, and to them we must look, with the greatest hope of success, for the fulfillment of the Terms. Our case was not an exceptional one with regard to the non-carrying out of the Terms. In 1871 British Columbia was admitted into the Confederation upon certain terms, which terms were not carried out. The British Columbians got up an agitation, and insisted that the terms should be fulfilled. The Government of that day (Hon. Alex. McKenzie's) at first said that they could not carry out the terms, as it was an impossibility. However, a Mr. Edgar was despatched, as a sort of confidential agent, to British Columbia to gather information; and to show the similarity of the two cases he (Mr. B.) would read the following extracts from the instructions given to Mr. Edgar by Premier McKenzie, in a letter dated Ottawa, Feb. 19, 1874:—

"You will point out that, as part of the Dominion, it is as much in their interests as in ours to pursue a careful judicious policy, also that in assuming a disposition, in spite of all reason, to insist on impossibilities, they are only setting at defiance all the rest of the Dominion, and the laws of nature. That by insisting on the power of flesh they will only stimulate a feeling on the part of people generally to avoid in future giving anything but the power of flesh."

"You will also put them in remembrance of the terms they themselves proposed, which terms were assented to by their Local Legislature, and point out that it was only the insane act of the Administration here, which gave such condition of Union to Columbia; that it could only have all means of provision in the general election, and saw immediately before the eyes of the people, in coming contracts the means of carrying the terms which at the time were known to be impossible of fulfillment."

The rebuffs the present Government of this Island have received from the Dominion Government reminded him (Mr. B.)

very forcibly of the treatment accorded to British Columbia. But the Government are wise in pressing the matter now, while we have a favorable government in power at Ottawa. We can have nothing to hope from a Liberal administration, as Mr. Mackenzie has already emphatically declared that the terms have been carried out as fully as it was possible to do so, or as the Island has a right to expect, whilst Mr. Davies taunts the Government for sending a delegation to the foot of the Throne. He (Mr. B.) had not lost faith in the justice of the Dominion Government, and thought it would be mere child's play to leave the matter in abeyance any longer. What does continuous mean? It certainly does not mean that we are to be isolated for six months of the year. We need not go any further back than ten years to see the immense loss sustained by this Province for want of continuous communication. The price of potatoes and produce had been high abroad, yet we were utterly unable to take advantage of such prices, which, had we a tunnel, a subway, or efficient steam communication, we could have done, and thousands of bushels of potatoes could have been added to our exports, realizing good prices to our producers. In presenting our side of the case in the clear, distinct and forcible manner they have done, our delegates are deserving of all praise. It has been said by our opponents that Earl Granville has given us no encouragement. On the contrary, Earl Granville's language and words of encouragement are quite as strong as could be expected at present and he (Mr. B.) had no doubt they would be much stronger when necessary. Mr. Bentley here pointed out Granville's favorable language and showed that he has gone into the matter, and pointed out what should be done. True, he says, the British Government has no right to interfere, but he tenders the use of his kindly offices and here again we have a case almost identical with that of British Columbia. A former Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, in replying to a deputation from British Columbia, had used almost the same words which he (Mr. B.) would read:

"It is not my wish, nor is it a part of my ordinary duty to interfere in these questions. They appear to me to be such as it should be within the province and competency of the Dominion Government and Legislature to bring to a satisfactory solution, and you will readily understand that Her Majesty's Government would be very reluctant to take any action which might be construed as expressing a doubt of the anxiety of the Dominion Government and Parliament to give the fullest consideration to such representation as may be made on the part of British Columbia, and to deal in the fairest and most liberal spirit with what may be established as being the just claims of that Province."

"At the same time I am strongly impressed with the importance of neglecting no means that an opportunity be adopted for effecting the speedy and amicable settlement of a question which cannot, without risk and obvious disadvantage to all parties, remain the subject of prolonged and, it may be, acrimonious discussion, and it has occurred to me that, as in the original terms and conditions of the admission of British Columbia into the Union certain points (as, for example, the amount of land to be appropriated for the Indians and the pensions to be assigned to public officers deprived of employment) were reserved for the decision of the Secretary of State, so in the present case it may possibly be acceptable to both parties that I would tender my good offices in determining the new points which have presented themselves for settlement."

This language is almost identical with that used by Earl Granville on the present occasion and yet the result of that delegation was very favorable, and the Terms of Union with British Columbia has been carried out in a way to excite the admiration of the world. He (Mr. B.) concluded by hoping that if it were found impossible to carry out the terms with us the next best thing would be done and we should receive an indemnity.

Mr. PERRY, on rising, said that this was a subject of the greatest importance that had ever been brought to the notice of this House. He was much pleased with the speech of the member from Georgetown (Hon. Mr. Gordon), but he thought that Mr. Bentley had gone too far in finding fault with the late Government, as he ought not to say what might endanger his case. He (Mr. P.) thought that on the whole the case had been well and strongly put by the delegates, but he could not approve of the action of the High Commissioner, Sir Charles Tupper, in the matter. At the time of union we had a subway to the United States—Respectably thought which we rushed our produce to their markets; but this subway had been destroyed through neglect of the present Dominion Government. Since 1881, representations had been made every year to the Government on this subject, but they produced no effect. Year after year both Houses had joined in addresses to the Ottawa Government, which had been duly forwarded and the receipt acknowledged, and then the matter dropped until the next year rolled around. We have been told by outside papers that the delegation had been courteously received, but we have been told nothing beyond this, whether they were invited to call on Her Majesty or not we do not know. The Government let the cat out towards the end of their resolution by speaking of an indemnity, whatever that may be. What the Government wanted was money and they wanted it badly. The people of this Province are not to be put off in this way. When the Dominion say decidedly "We have done all we can do, or all we will do," then we want—not indemnification—but separation. All we have to show at present as the result of the delegation is a very strong case, a very elaborated case and—some \$3,000 costs to pay. He (Mr. P.) felt disposed to thank the delegates for their able exposition of our case, but he wanted to know more.

Hon. Mr. PROWSE said that the well deserved compliment bestowed upon the delegates by the Leader of the Opposition would redound to the credit of the Honorable gentleman. He referred to the decision with which his proposal to establish communication between the Island and the Mainland by means of a tunnel was greeted only a few years ago; and said it was a significant fact that the question is now occupying the minds of eminent men in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. He hoped he would yet live to see the day when the iron horse would be crossing the Strait through a subway or through a proper tunnel. He was a supporter of the general policy of Sir John McDonald; and he believed that, as the Government of Sir John had carried out the Terms of Union with British Columbia to the letter, so the Government of Sir John would carry out the Terms of Union with Prince Edward Island. The efforts of the Local Government and Legislature in this matter had, no doubt, been opposed by Sir John's Government; but their opposition was at all

events on the other one. It was not secret and underhand like that of Mr. McKenzie's towards British Columbia. Mr. Prowse here quoted the following paragraphs from the instructions of Mr. McKenzie to Mr. Edgar who was sent to British Columbia as a spy while the agitation for the fulfillment of the Terms of Union was going on then—the instructions were marked "confidential":

"If you find any favorable disposition among the leading men of the Province towards affording a generous consideration to the obvious necessity of giving a sufficient time for pushing the road through Columbia, you will endeavor to ascertain what value they attach to such consideration."

"In the event of your finding that there is a willingness to accept a proposition to extend the time for building the road, you will endeavor to make some proposition from them directly or indirectly, and communicate this to us by cipher telegraph at once."

"If on the other hand, they make or indicate no proposition, you will telegraph to us what you think would be acceptable, but wait a reply before making any proposition."

"In the event of your finding men evincing a disposition to negotiate, you will endeavor to secure something like a combination of parties to sanction any proposition you may think desirable."

"It will be well that you should take some means of ascertaining the popular view of the Railway question. This may be done by mingling among the people and allowing them to speak freely while you listen, remembering in taking impressions that your audience may be impressed by special local considerations rather than the general question."

"It will be well not to confine yourself to the vicinity of the Government offices or Victoria, but to cross to the mainland and meet with the people at Westminster and other towns and villages on the lower reaches of the Fraser."

"You will find there a disposition manifested to negotiate at Ottawa, in which case you will advise us of the existence of such a desire."

"You will take special care not to admit in any way that we are bound to build the railway to Esquimalt or any other place on the Island; and while you do not do this, you are not to build there, to let them understand that this is wholly and purely a concession, and that its construction must be contingent on a reasonable course being pursued regarding other parts of the scheme."

Mr. PROWSE commented upon these instructions; and contrasted the conduct of Mr. Edgar with that of Sir Charles Tupper before Earl Granville. He expressed his firm belief in the friendly offices of Earl Granville and in the disposition of the Dominion Government to deal justly with the Island; but if the event proved that he was mistaken, he, for his part, would not hesitate to demand separation. He felt sure, however, that there would never be a necessity for this; and in conclusion expressed himself as proud of the ability displayed by the delegates while in England.

Mr. YEO (Leader of the Opposition) congratulated the mover of the resolution (Hon. Mr. Gordon) on the moderate and impartial tone of his speech, and said that it would be well if other members would rise above party, and speak in the same way. He contended that neither our memorials or our delegates had received courteous treatment from the Dominion Government; and he thought that while we continue to contend among ourselves, our chances of obtaining redress for our grievances are very slight indeed. There is at all events no evidence in the papers before the House that the Government of Sir John McDonald intend to do us justice. Indeed the very reverse is the case. The hon. member for Murray Harbor (Hon. Mr. Prowse) had, in his opinion, gone out of his way in instancing the treatment meted out to British Columbia by the late Government of Canada. What was done in regard to British Columbia does not effect our case in the least. It is high time that decided steps be taken with respect to our case. In the light of the result, he questioned whether it had been advisable to pass the Address to the Queen. The delegates undoubtedly have done very well indeed, though he thought they should have informed the House more particularly as to what had transpired between them and the Dominion Government, and between them and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. But Earl Granville's despatch was to him disappointing. He was free to confess that he had hoped that Her Majesty the Queen would have been advised to interpose her authority, and to require the fulfillment of the Terms of Union with this Province. The offer of Earl Granville's friendly offices was, no doubt, very kind and courteous. But the tone of his remarks was not, in his opinion, at all reassuring. He had hoped that something more decided would have taken place. We have a good case, and we must stand united to uphold it. The people should insist that their representatives should unite in demanding that the Terms of Union be carried out to the letter. He did not like the concluding sentence in the resolution, and suggested that it be struck out. He trusted that necessity would never again force us to accept from the Dominion Government anything less than our rights in full.

Hon. Mr. SULLIVAN reminded the Leader of the Opposition that all were agreed last session that in sending the joint address to the Queen, the Legislature were pursuing the proper course. The address was sent because the Imperial Government was one of the parties to the agreement entered into between Canada and Prince Edward Island. At a meeting of the Privy Council—present, the Queen's Most Gracious Majesty, Lord President, Earl Granville, Earl Kimberley, Lord Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone—it was set forth that,—

"Whereas, by the British North America Act, 1867, provision was made for the Union of the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into the Dominion of Canada, and it was amongst other things enacted that it should be lawful for the Queen, by and with the advice of Her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, on Addresses from the Houses of the Parliament of Canada, and of the Legislature of the Colony of Prince Edward Island, to admit that Colony into the said Union on such terms and conditions as should be in the Addresses expressed, and as the Queen should think fit to approve, etc."

The terms and conditions then approved by Her Majesty in Council have not been carried out. The Government of this Province, representing the people of this Province, felt it to be a duty incumbent upon them to see that the terms are fulfilled. They found that the Dominion Government was doing nothing in the matter; and therefore they appealed to the Legislature, and the Legislature unanimously passed an Address to the Queen, requesting the Imperial Government to use its influence with the Dominion Government in order that Prince Edward Island might receive justice in this respect. It was never thought by any one that the Imperial Government would attempt to coerce the Government of Canada. The Dominion Government is bound by law, by reason, and by morality to fulfill their bargain if it be possible to do so; and it was felt that to this end recommendations on the part of the Imperial Government would—as in the case of British Columbia—have great weight in inducing the Dominion Government to put forth energetic and reasonable efforts. With respect to the despatch of Earl Granville

there was great reason—not for disappointment—but for satisfaction. The delegates had been well received and patiently heard by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he might inform the Leader of the Opposition that they had also been well received and courteously treated by the Government at Ottawa. They had gone to Ottawa for letters of introduction to the Home Authorities; and they had no reason to regret having done so. While in Ottawa they had discussed the whole matter with Lord Lansdowne, Sir John McDonald and other members of the Government, and brought prominently before them the Subway Scheme, in which warm interest was evinced. Then the delegates proceeded to England. Soon after they landed, they had a long interview with Earl Granville, and subsequently they had several interviews with His Lordship and the Under Secretary of State, Earl Granville, from the first, expressed a desire that the matter should be amicably arranged. He is anxious that peace and harmony should prevail throughout Canada; and at one of the interviews he asked the delegates if they would have any objections to Sir Charles Tupper meeting them at his office so that he might hear the matter on both sides. The delegates gladly assented to the proposal; for they felt that they had a strong case and that nothing to fear but much to gain from the fullest discussion. They accordingly met Sir Charles Tupper and had no reason to regret it. In fact Sir Charles Tupper, while the delegates were in England, showed himself as he had done before, a true friend to Prince Edward Island. As in duty bound he presented the case of Canada to the best of his ability. He was there for that purpose, and the delegates were there to present the case of Prince Edward Island. Earl Granville heard both sides. He expressed great interest in the Subway Scheme, as explained by the delegates. Sir Charles also admitted its great importance; and he felt sure that the Government of Canada would give the whole matter their favorable consideration—such favorable consideration as is followed by satisfactory results. He was convinced that it was a fortunate circumstance that the Government of the Province is in sympathy with the Dominion Government in questions of general policy. It was well understood at Ottawa that no consideration of party would prevent the Government of the Province from insisting upon the fulfillment of the Terms of Union; and he believed the matter was much more likely to be amicably and satisfactorily arranged than if the two Governments were opposed to each other.

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