

in all, sixteen members, or fewer than one-half the number which met at Quebec in 1864. Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland were not represented.<sup>1</sup>

The first business of the Conference was to elect the Hon. John A. Macdonald, chairman, and Lieut.-Col. Hewitt Bernard, secretary.

The resolutions of the Quebec Conference were then taken up, considered seriatim, amended in certain particulars and adopted anew. From these amended resolutions was prepared a rough draft of the Bill that was necessary to give them effect. This rough draft was then submitted to the law officers of the Crown, who framed successive drafts expressive of the wishes of the Conference, until the measure reached its final form, and became law as the British North America Act.

Following the precedents of Charlottetown and Quebec, the discussions of the London Conference were held in secret, and no official record of the proceedings exists. As at Quebec, the secretary began by recording the minutes of each meeting; this record gradually became more and more intermittent, and finally ceased. These incomplete draft minutes, certain notes and memoranda preserved by Colonel Bernard, together with various drafts of the Bill, constitute all the records of this important body. They were published by me in 1895 in the volume to which I have already referred.

The question has more than once been asked, To what extent were the colonial delegates given a free hand in the formation of their constitution? My impression is that, with the exception of the incident connected with the proposal to style the new Confederation "the Kingdom of Canada," which will be related farther on, there was no disposition on the part of the Imperial authorities to interfere with the conclusions reached by the conference.

The 'Letters of Lord Blachford' in which (p. 301) Sir Frederick Rogers speaks of Macdonald as being the "ruling genius" of the occasion, and also his private notes, which have been preserved and will be published some day, tend to support this view. If there is any criticism of the Imperial Ministers and officials associated with the conference to be offered, it is that they failed to grasp the full significance of the occasion. They were ready enough to promote Confederation, as a domestic arrangement, agreeably to the wishes of the colonies, but showed no adequate appreciation of the far-reaching and momentous character of the business engaging the attention of the colonial statesmen assembled under the shadow of the Palace of Westminster.

<sup>1</sup> Of the London Conference, three members, Messrs. Howland of Canada, Ritchie of Nova Scotia, and Wilmot of New Brunswick, had not been members of the Quebec Conference, and in consequence are not commonly included among the "Fathers of Confederation." In 1866, speaking broadly, the battle was looked upon as won. The London Conference took for its basis the Quebec resolutions, in which the governing principle of Confederation had been established, and its work, though highly important, was largely in the nature of giving form and expression to propositions already determined on. It seems fitting, therefore, that the honourable distinction "Fathers of Confederation" should be reserved to those who composed the Quebec Conference, and who afterwards advocated Confederation in their respective provinces, at the sacrifice, in more than one instance, of their political futures.