

provinces as its policy. The political situation in Great Britain was not favourable to any decisive action at the time, and some years elapsed before the question was taken up in a practical manner.

Towards the close of the year 1861 the country had been greatly excited over the Trent difficulty with the United States. At one moment war between Great Britain and the republic seemed imminent. It was doubtless under the influence of the national feeling thus aroused, that the government led by Cartier introduced a Militia Bill of very wide scope. The government at this time was receiving an extremely precarious support; and on their Militia Bill they sustained a decisive defeat, largely owing to the unpopularity of the measure in Lower Canada. Upon the resignation of Cartier and his colleagues, J. S. Macdonald was entrusted with the task of forming a government. Two short-lived administrations followed, when it became apparent that parliamentary government in Canada, as it was then constituted, had come to a dead stop. On several fundamental questions there was between eastern and western Canada an antagonism of views which made it impossible for any government to receive adequate support. Thus the idea of a larger union, with a relaxation of the bonds in which Upper and Lower Canada were struggling, forced itself on the attention of the leading men of both parties. The leader in this new path was undoubtedly George Brown, who, early in the session, had been appointed chairman of a committee to consider the best means of remedying the political difficulties referred to. The committee had recommended the adoption of a federative system, either as between Upper and Lower Canada or as between all the British North American colonies. Brown having consented to co-operate, if necessary, with his political opponents to that end, a coalition government was formed under the leadership of J. A. Macdonald, in which Brown accepted the position of President of the Council.

At this very time the three Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island were considering the question of a federal union amongst themselves, and had arranged a meeting at Charlottetown in September, 1864, to consider the matter. A delegation from the legislature of Canada attended to place their larger scheme before the Maritime delegates. It was agreed to adjourn the convention to Quebec, there to meet on the 10th October. From the deliberations which then took place sprang the Dominion of Canada as it exists to-day; for, although the federation as formed by the British North America Act only embraced the provinces of Ontario and Quebec (Upper and Lower Canada), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, provision was made for taking in the remaining provinces and portions of British North America, as opportunity might offer. The immediate effect of Confederation was to relax the tension between Upper and Lower Canada, and, by providing a wider stage of action, to give a new and enlarged political life to all the provinces thus brought into union.

The political history of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the period preceding Confederation ran parallel in many respects with that of Upper and Lower Canada. As already mentioned, New Brunswick became a separate province in 1784. Its first Legislative Assembly, consisting of twenty-six members, met at Fredericton in January, 1785. It was to be expected that the home authorities, dealing with sparse populations scattered over the vast extents of territory acquired by British arms, should have provided for them institutions and methods of administration to some extent of a paternal character. It was natural too that the point of view should in the first place be the imperial one. As result two conflicting tendencies arose, the tendency of the strictly colonial system to consolidate itself and to form