

A Conference That Made History

Builded Better than They Knew

The Confederation Fathers Viewed The Significance Of The Charlottetown Conference.

Following extracts from the report of the Confederation Fathers on the Charlottetown Conference, as published by the Hon. Edward Whelan, and of interest attached to the gathering those who participated:

Hon. John A. Macdonald: The people of these lower provinces were separated too far from each other. Our hearts were one; our loyalty and attachment to the Mother Country was one and the same—except that of one ancestry—except that of one Canada—and yet we were unfortunately severed from each other by the present constitutions of our respective governments. He had, however, every reason to believe that the result of the convention that he had attended in Charlottetown for the past week, would lead to a federation of all the North American provinces, would tend very materially to increase their individual and collective prosperity, politically, socially, and in their united march towards that national progress which would make them the first nation on the globe. He then alluded to the uninterrupted pleasure and success which he, in common with the delegates, felt at their stay in this lovely Island.

Hon. George Etienne Cartier: They (the delegates) met to enquire whether it was possible for the Provinces from their present elementary and isolated material to form a nation or kingdom. One of herself, though she was a country with a vast and extensive interior, could not make a nation, neither could the time Provinces of themselves form a kingdom. It was essential that those national elements and resources should be united and combined, in order that they in their trade, intelligence, national power and prosperity might be rated as at least the first nation of the world.

Hon. Dr. Tupper: The deliberations of the convention were conducted apart from the public eye. There was no attempt to conceal its proceedings, in order that the confidential character of the delegation might be speedier results. He felt assured that all would endorse the

sentiment that it was our duty and interest to cement the colonies together by every tie that can add to their greatness. A union of the North American provinces would elevate their position, consolidate their influence and advance their interests, and at the same time continue their fealty to their Mother Country and their Queen, which fealty is the glory of us all.

Hon. George Brown (speaking at Toronto):

"We arrived at Charlottetown on the 1st September and most kindly and hospitably were we received. We were invited to take seats in the conference and to address its members, and we at once proceeded to open up to them the object of our mission. What we said to them was this: We in Canada have had serious sectional differences, but at last we have agreed to a settlement of our troubles on a basis just and equitable to all sections of our country. We are about to frame a new constitution, which will be acceptable to the great mass of our people, and it has occurred to us on hearing that you too were considering a change in your constitution, whether it would not be well for us all to sit down together and consider how far it would lead for the welfare and good government of our provinces were we to unite them all under one system of government. Well, sir, we did sit down together. We discussed the whole subject in all its bearings. We looked at it from every point of view; and after eight or ten days' deliberation we came to the unanimous conclusion that if the details could be settled upon a basis just to all, it would be for the advantage of the whole of these provinces that we should be united."

The canny attitude of Prince Edward Islanders, as expressed by the Hon. George Coles at Saint John:

"Canada has come down to the Maritime Provinces and this little daughter—Prince Edward Island—has been wooed but not yet won. The blandishments of the wooer had not altogether prevailed. Before he would consent to the wedding he should understand fully whether Canada, with her expanse of territory and great debt, was able to maintain her as well as she was in her present position. The prospect, however, he finally confessed, seemed to favour a happy and prosperous federal union."

Island Fathers of Confederation

Brief Sketches of Island Statesmen Who Were Prominent in Connection With the Charlottetown Conference

Prince Edward Island is proud of its Confederation Fathers, whose names are briefly outlined in the following sketches:

HON. JAMES O. POPE

Minister of Prince Edward Island (1865-67 and 1870-72) and Minister of Marine and Fisheries Canada. (1878-82) the Hon. James O. Pope was born at St. John's, P.E.I., on June 11, 1826. Second son of the Hon. Joseph Palmer of Charlottetown, and Lucy, nee of Captain Colledge. He was educated in England; and in 1847 went to California during the gold rush. He returned to Prince Edward Island, however, and en-

gaged in shipbuilding and other mercantile enterprises.

He was a member of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island for the Beedoke District 1867-67, and for Charlottetown from 1873 to 1878. He became a Minister without portfolio in the Palmer administration in 1869, Colonial Secretary in the Gray administration from 1863 to 1865, Prime Minister from 1865 to 1867, from 1870 to 1872, and again for a few months in 1873.

Mr. Pope opposed the entrance of the Island into Confederation, but on the basis of the Quebec Resolutions in 1864 and on the terms secured by the Haythorne government in 1873; but in the

latter year he succeeded in bringing about federation on more favorable terms, and was elected a member of the Canadian House of Commons, first for Prince County and subsequently for Queen's. He died in Summerside on May 18, 1885.

HON. J. H. GRAY, C.M.G.

Hon. John Hamilton Gray, Prime Minister of Prince Edward Island, 1863-65, and one of the Fathers of Confederation, was born in this Province in 1812 and educated at Charlottetown. From 1831 to 1852 he saw service in the British army as a cavalry officer, chiefly in India and South Africa. He returned to Prince Edward Island about 1856, and in 1858 was first elected to represent the Fourth District of Queen's in the Island Assembly.

As Prime Minister and president of the Executive Council, Colonel Gray presided as chairman of the Charlottetown Conference in 1864. He was a delegate to the Quebec Conference. On the rejection of the Quebec Resolutions by the Prince Edward Island Legislature he retired from political life and devoted himself to military duties. He had been since 1862 officer commanding the volunteer brigade of the Island, with the rank of Colonel; and in 1867 he was appointed Adjutant General of the militia of the Island. In 1871 he was created a C.M.G. In 1873 he was appointed Deputy Adjutant-General of the militia of District No. 10 of the Dominion. He died at Inkerman House, Charlottetown, Royalty, Aug. 13, 1887.

HON. T. HEATH HAVILAND

Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island from 1879 to 1884. Hon. Thomas Heath Haviland was born in Charlottetown Nov. 13, 1822, the son of the Hon. Thomas Haviland. He was educated in Brussels, Belgium, and on his return to the Island was called to the bar in 1846. The following year he was elected a member of the Legislative Assembly for Georgetown; and this constituency he represented continuously until 1870. From 1859 to 1862 he was a member of the Executive Council, as Colonial Secretary; and from 1863 to 1864 he was Speaker of the Assembly; in 1865 he was Solicitor-General; and from 1866 to 1867 he was again Colonial Secretary. In 1870 he was elected to the Legislative Council. He was one of the delegates from Prince Edward Island to the Quebec Conference in 1864; and he was one of the three delegates who went to Ottawa in 1873 to arrange the terms on which Prince Edward Island was finally admitted into Confederation. When the Province was included in the Dominion he was called to the Canadian Senate; but in 1879 he resigned on his appointment as Lieutenant Governor. He died in Charlottetown a year after his retirement from this office, on Sept. 11, 1895.

HON. DAVID LAIRD, P.C.

Hon. David Laird was born at New Glasgow, P.E.I., on March 12, 1833, the son of the Hon. Alexander Laird, an executive councillor of the Province. He was educated at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Truro, N.S. He founded and for many years edited and published the Charlottetown Patriot. In 1871 he was elected for Belfast in the Legislative Assembly, and in 1872 became a member of the Hawthorne administration. He had opposed Confederation on the basis of the Quebec Resolutions in 1864, but in 1873 was one of the delegates sent to Ottawa to arrange for the admission of the Island into the Dominion. In 1873 Mr. Laird was elected for Queen's in the Canadian House of Commons, and was regarded as the leader of the Prince Edward Island members in the House. His refusal to support Sir John Macdonald in the "Pacific Scandal" crisis in 1873 was one of the chief factors in the fall of the Macdonald Government.

From 1873 to 1876 he was Minister of the Interior in the Mackenzie administration, and in 1876 he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories. On the termination of his period of office as Lieutenant Governor he returned to Charlottetown, and resumed the control of the Patriot. In 1893, however, he was appointed Indian Commissioner for the North West Territories, Manitoba, and Keewatin, and held this post until his death at Ottawa on Jan. 12, 1914.

HON. A. A. MACDONALD

The Hon. Andrew Archibald Macdonald, Lieutenant-Governor of Prince Edward Island from 1884 to 1889, was born at Three Rivers, P.E.I., on Feb. 14, 1828. He was educated at the county grammar school and became a merchant and ship owner. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly for

Rediscovered Letter of Sir John A. Macdonald on Confederation Terms

FOUND RECENTLY AMONG FAMILY DOCUMENTS BY LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR DEBLOIS, THE LETTER SETS FORTH SIR JOHN'S ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF P. E. ISLAND JOINING THE DOMINION.

Published for the first time in The Guardian last March, the following letter, signed and written by Sir John A. Macdonald in his own hand throughout, was discovered recently by Hon. George D. DeBlois, Lieutenant Governor of the Province.

Dated at Ottawa February 9, 1870—three years before Prince Edward Island's entry into Confederation—the letter was part of a personal correspondence between the great Confederation statesman and G. W. DeBlois, Esq., Charlottetown, the present Lieutenant Governor's grandfather. It had lain for at least half a century in an unopened strong-box containing other family documents.

The text of the letter follows:

"Dear Sir:—
I have to thank you very much for your interesting letter of the 21st ultimo, and am glad to learn that the prospects of Confederation in your Island are, though perhaps slowly, certainly brightening."

Georgetown in 1853, and in 1863 to the Legislative Council. He was a delegate from Prince Edward Island to the Quebec Conference of 1864. From 1867 to 1872 he sat as a member of the Executive Council. On the inclusion of the Island in the Dominion in 1873 he became Postmaster General in the provincial cabinet. This portfolio he retained until he received his appointment as Lieutenant Governor. In 1891 he was called to the Senate of Canada, retaining his seat there until his death at Ottawa on March 21, 1912.

HON. WILLIAM H. POPE

Born at Beedoke, P.E.I., on May 29, 1825, Mr. Pope was the eldest son of the Hon. Joseph Pope, Charlottetown. He was educated in England, studied law under Hon. Edward Palmer in Charlottetown, and was called to the bar in 1847. In 1859 he was appointed Colonial Secretary of the Island, though without a seat in the Executive Council and from 1863 to 1873 he represented Belfast in the Legislative Assembly.

He was a strong advocate of Confederation, and was in 1864 a delegate to both the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences. In 1873 he was appointed Judge of the County Court of Prince County; this office he held until his death at Summerside on Oct. 7, 1879. His wife was a daughter of Hon. Thomas Desbrisay, Charlottetown, by whom he had eight children of whom Sir Joseph Pope, the biographer and literary executor of Sir John Macdonald, was the eldest. He was the author of "The Confederation Question considered from the P.E.I. Point of View," (Charlottetown, 1866).

HON. EDWARD PALMER

Born at Charlottetown, Sept. 1, 1809, Mr. Palmer studied law under his father, James B. Palmer, and was called to the bar in 1831. From 1835 to 1860 he was a member of the Legislative Assembly for Charlottetown and Royalty, and from 1860 to 1873 a member of the Legislative Council. He held office successively in the Island administration as Solicitor General, Attorney General, and President of the Council. He was a delegate to the Charlottetown Conference and to the Quebec Conference later in the same year. He opposed Confederation on the basis of the Quebec Resolutions, but in 1873 threw his influence in favour of Union. In 1873 he was appointed a Judge of the Queen's County Court, and in 1874 became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Island, an office which he held until his death on Nov. 3, 1869.

HON. EDWARD WHELAN

Born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1824, Mr. Whelan emigrated to Nova Scotia at an early age and entered the employ of Hon. Joseph Howe as a printer's apprentice. In 1842 he came to Prince Edward Island and launched the "Palladium" newspaper. In August, 1847, the "Examiner" which he conducted with untiring energy until his death, made its appearance.

He represented St. Peter's District in the Legislature for twenty consecutive years, and was noted no less for his oratory than for his literary gifts, which he devoted to the cause of Responsible Government.

Mr. Whelan published "The Union of the British Provinces" (Charlottetown), an account of the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences which has been invaluable

"The terms offered by the Canadian Government to Prince Edward on the union are, I am pleased to find, generally admitted to be liberal even by antis. They are so liberal in fact that the opposition press in Western Canada has already opened fire upon us for our lavishness. We are certain to have some difficulty in carrying the propositions, and it is equally certain that we would be unable to carry any large concessions. I think, therefore, that the friends of the union in the Island should make up their minds to press upon the people that these terms are as large as can possibly be got, and that they are sufficiently advantageous to justify their acceptance."

"No Railroad"

"As I gather from your letter, the chief objection to the scheme is that no provision is made for building a railroad in your Island while the Intercolonial and other railways have been and are being built on the mainland."

"You must remember, however, that at the time of the union in 1867, all the provinces were possessed of public properties of great value, such as railways, canals, railway securities, slides, booms, etc., etc., all giving more or less annual revenue. These were all transferred by the Provinces to the Dominion but the provinces nevertheless continued to be charged with the debt incurred in their construction. The people of Prince Edward Island will have the same interest in these public works and in the revenue accruing from them as any other part of the Dominion."

"Your Province is to be allowed to enter at the same amount of debt per head as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, say \$36.77 per head, and yet you do not hand over a single shilling's worth of property to the Dominion."

Debt Allowance

"As luckily for you, your debt will not amount to the sum you are allowed to enter at, the Dominion will be obliged to pay you five per cent interest on the difference and this interest capitalized will create a fund out of which you can construct your own railway, or nearly so. If you add to the sum so capitalized a moderate sum as being the probable earnings of your railway above working expenses, the two will, it seems to me, furnish you with

(Continued on page 12)

to Confederation students. He died at Charlottetown Dec. 10, 1897.

HON. GEORGE COLES

In the protracted struggle for Responsible Government in Prince Edward Island Mr. Coles took the leading part. Born Sept. 20, 1810, the eldest son of James Coles, he achieved success without the advantage either of wealth or superior education. In 1842 he was elected to represent the 1st District of Queen's in the House of Assembly. In 1864 he was a delegate of Prince Edward Island at both the Charlottetown and Quebec Conferences in regard to Confederation. In 1867 his health broke down, and he retired from public life in the following year. He died at Charlottetown on Aug. 21, 1875.