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Nova Scotia, and its Relation to Confederation.

By Hon. A. K. MacLean, M.P.*

AT a regular luncheon of the Canadian Club held on the 25th March, Hon. A. K. MacLean said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club of Toronto,—I suppose it is unnecessary to assure you of my appreciation of the honor which you do me to-day in asking me to address your club upon matters referable to my native Province of Nova Scotia. In the several addresses which have been given before the Club, I understand, gentlemen from the various provinces have accentuated Provincial developments. It is always better to accentuate national rather than Provincial views. The shibboleth of Provincial rights is one I have heard frequently in my lifetime; it never had very great attraction for me, but it is one to be regarded and thought of. But I regard it as the duty of all Canadians from whatever provinces they come to take a larger view of national life. But still it may not be impossible to take pride in one another's history, and in the achievements of the men who have shed lustre upon these various provinces.

The chairman in introducing me said my subject was to be "Nova Scotia and its Relation to Confederation." That was not the task assigned me by your secretary, but the herculean, one of telling about Nova Scotia from its early history up to Confederation, with some remarks upon the struggle for Confederation, the history of its later days, and then were to be added some thoughts on the future of the Province. That would be a task indeed, for the history of Nova Scotia takes one back practically to the discovery of America. If I were to attempt to cover such a large amount of ground, I might heartily wish the task had been given to one more worthy to perform it. You perhaps have heard of the irreverent but practical man who said he felt like a dog

*Hon. Alexander K. Maclean, LL.B., M.P., is the Liberal member of Parliament for the city of Halifax, sharing that constituency with the Right Honorable R. L. Borden, Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Maclean was formerly Attorney-General for Nova Scotia. He possesses a vigorous, forceful personality, and is a broad-minded man and an effective speaker.

with tallow legs chasing an asbestos cat in that perhaps now lost territory—Hades. I admit, Mr. President and gentlemen, that the task I have is somewhat different, and the location at least is different, because I am in Toronto, and the company is very much better, because I am with my fellow Canadians, the members of the Canadian Club of Toronto. (Laughter.)

Now, Mr. President and gentlemen, I must naturally be discursive, but I hope I may be brief. Let me refer briefly to the history of Nova Scotia, a history rich in romance and adventure, in war and massacre, in devotion and sacrifice, in politics and public men. The first to visit Nova Scotia were the Norsemen, who came from Iceland, more than nine hundred years ago, but their history was forgotten and Nova Scotia had to be rediscovered.

In 1497, five years after Columbus discovered America, Cabot, under a charter received from Henry VII., traversed Nova Scotia. He founded no settlement, but his arrival there laid the foundation for the claim to North America by future kings of England.

The first people to plant a colony there were the French, who in 1604 established one at Port Royal, now Annapolis, the leaders in this expedition being the noblemen Sieur De Monts and Samuel de Champlain. This settlement was afterwards abandoned.

In 1620, or thereabouts, King James I. gave his kinsman, Sir William Alexander, the grant of the country then called Acadia, and in the charter that country was first called New Scotland, but it was in Latin in the charter—Nova Scotia—and it was at this time that the province obtained this name, which is the only memorial of the settlement by Sir William Alexander, as it proved a failure.

In 1632 Charles I. ceded the country back to France, and it was again known as Acadia. Oliver Cromwell recovered it, and it was once more Nova Scotia. In 1667 Charles II. ceded it back to France, and it was called Acadia once more. After the expulsion of King James II. Acadia once again became British territory, having been captured by British forces which went out with a fleet from Boston. In 1697 William III. restored Acadia to the French, and the name Nova Scotia was once more lost. After the war of 1713 Nova Scotia again, and for the last time returned to the British domain. Acadia was heard of for the last time, and Nova Scotia has ever since remained British territory, except that the Isle of Cape Breton was occupied by the French until it ultimately became part of the British territory in 1760.

That briefly is the history of Nova Scotia, and it discloses a great deal of territorial seesawing as you will see, but I am sure we who live to-day are proud of the ultimate destiny of that province, that, if you please, it finally and forever became a part of the British Dominion. (Applause.)

Again, the matter of the people who settled in the province is an important thing, as it is in any province, for after all it is the personal equation which determines the importance and the future of any country in this world. Sir John Bourinot designates some four or five main epochs in the settlement of the Province of Nova Scotia. First, the French settlement, to which I have already referred, which was confined to the western portion, a period of feuds, which ended in that regrettable incident, in 1755, the expulsion of the Acadians, a historical incident remembered in history, poetry and song.

Halifax was founded in 1749 under Lord Cornwallis and Governor Shirley. Then there followed a small German settlement, in 1753 I think, chiefly in the county of Lunenburg, west of Halifax, which I had at one time the honor of representing in the House of Commons.

Following that there were two streams of settlement from New England, one a pre-loyalist movement, which preceded the American Revolution, taking place in 1749, supplemented by an immigration in 1760. These New England settlers were a splendid type of men, and from them sprang many men who afterwards became illustrious in my native province. Subsequent to the American Revolution there was a further American settlement in that province, as there was in the Province of Ontario north of Lake Ontario. The immigration received from the United Empire Loyalists was a splendid contribution to the population of that province. I may say the same of this stream of New England immigration as of the pre-loyal immigration which preceded it, that it included many men who were distinguished in New England and many of their sons became eminent in Nova Scotia.

There was another very important settlement in the Province of Nova Scotia, known as the Scotch people, and you will pardon me, I am sure, when I say that any province might be proud to receive a settlement from this race of people. (Applause.) There was, as I before stated, an attempted settlement by Sir William Alexander, who was created Baron of Nova Scotia, but this settlement failed, the only trace of it being in the name of Nova Scotia. But in 1773 there was an immigration of thirty Scotch families to Pictou, and this was followed by a number of others up till

1820, and altogether the province received quite a Scotch settlement. We owe to these Scotch pioneers a great deal of that which is best in the province. I think Dr. Falconer will agree with me when I say that to them we owe the foundation of the splendid school system which subsequently obtained in that province, and from that race have come men who became distinguished in arts, letters, science, theology, law, politics, and many other spheres. Let me repeat, that in my judgment the province probably owes more to these Scotch settlers than to any others who came there.

Passing to another important question, let me say that the Province of Nova Scotia was the first part of the Dominion to have representative government. In October, 1758, the Legislature was elected by the people and met at Halifax, since which year the Legislature of that province has continuously ever sat. Now this event preceded the organization of the United States of America by eighteen years; then, and for five years later, Ontario and Quebec were under French rule; up to that time no Englishman had seen Australia or New Zealand; there were no British dominions in South Africa; and it was not until a century afterwards that British Columbia became a Crown colony. You will thus see that Nova Scotia holds the primacy in politics among her sister provinces in the Canadian Confederacy. This has given the people of that province a century and a half's experience in the science of self-government and established political traditions. It was due to this, possibly, that Joseph Howe, the beloved Tribune of the People of that province, was able to teach the British Government some lessons in democratic government in this country.

It is often said—I have often had it said to me by friends and acquaintances, some of them from Ontario—that Nova Scotians had an aptitude for politics; indeed, some critical ones have ventured to say that Nova Scotians devoted altogether too much time to politics. I would not apologize for the interest we have taken in the past in politics: I do not think we take in it any more interest than we should; I doubt whether we take any more than you do. It is the greatest question of all that can concern any province; it is synonymous with questions of State and humanity; any province should give to politics the very best men it has, and in doing so I say it will render a great service to the State and the people of our country. (Applause.)

The establishment of its first Legislature marks a very important epoch in the history of my native province. The Canadian Club of Halifax sometime ago suggested the idea

of the erection of a tower to commemorate this event. The President of the Canadian Club, Mr. McGillivray, of the Bank of Commerce—I suppose he is from Bruce, Ontario, by the name—is one of the most active in the movement. It has been proposed that there might be a cash contribution by every province and every self-governing Dominion, and also by the United Kingdom. The interior of the tower will serve as a museum, and many interesting mementoes will be placed therein, among other articles from St. Malo, from which Jacques Cartier sailed; and from Brouages, in Normandy, the home place of Samuel de Champlain. You will therefore see that this is one important fact about our history, and one of which we naturally feel proud.

In Nova Scotia we had our fight for what we term responsible government, as you had in Ontario. I need, however, say little concerning this part of the matter. Responsible government in Nova Scotia was won by orderly means, by lawful, constitutional methods. Joseph Howe, the leader of that movement, always counselled moderation, while the leaders in Quebec and Ontario, Papineau and Mackenzie, frequently, I regret to say, exhorted their followers to acts and operations which Joseph Howe always advised against. I think the methods of that province, on the whole, were the best.

The next matter to which I would like to allude, and very briefly, is Confederation. It has often been inquired of Nova Scotians why they protested so strongly against union, and continued to do so after Confederation was an accomplished fact. Confederation came about, so far as Ontario and Quebec were concerned, by reason of the unfortunate feuds between those provinces, and Confederation was a necessary result to overcome this. In Nova Scotia, however, conditions were different: we had a contented people, we were a sovereign State ever since the founding of the first legislature in 1758; and I think it fair for me to say, it was only natural that we felt proud of our past. It was a bitter struggle, and the bitterness remained for some years after the union was consummated.

Confederation was first mooted in 1864, by James W. Johnson, leader of the Conservative party, an able and patriotic man. Joseph Howe, his political opponent at the time, was not very enthusiastic in favor of the proposal, but he invoked the wider moral influence of the mother country and of the colonies. In 1864, I think it was, a conference was held at Charlottetown, and it decided to reconvene at Quebec where union was decided upon, the delegates agreeing to the

same. The Nova Scotia Legislature at that time approved of the scheme of Confederation by a considerable majority, 31 to 19. The Premier of the province was Dr. Tupper, now Sir Charles Tupper. The anti-confederates sent a delegation to London to oppose the consummation of the union by the passage of the British North America Act, but failed. Joseph Howe and some of his friends went to London to oppose the consummation of the union even then, but also failed. Shortly after there were two elections, one for the House of Commons at Ottawa, and one for the Provincial Legislature. Only one out of nineteen of the members elected to the House of Commons, Sir Charles Tupper, and only two out of thirty-eight of those elected for the Provincial Legislature, were favorable to Confederation. It was therefore natural that those opposed to Confederation should continue their agitation against it. As a matter of fact, they sent a petition to London asking for its repeal. Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Howe were opposed to one another on the question, but later Sir Charles suggested to Sir John A. Macdonald to see Mr. Howe, in order to obtain his co-operation if possible. An interview was held later between Sir John Rose, Minister of Finance of the day, and Mr. Howe. Sir John Rose offered better terms to the province, which he accepted, and he also accepted a seat in the Cabinet of Sir John A. Macdonald, and ceased his struggle against Confederation. Howe died at Government House. The position which Howe took was not that of protest against union if terms satisfactory could be arranged, but he objected to the arbitrary action of the Nova Scotia Legislature in saying the province should go in; he held that it should be put to the electors, and if they assented it would be all right then. I think the position he took was consistently sound. However, in the end Confederation was consummated. There is now no opposition, and in all Canada no people are imbued with the national spirit to a greater degree than the people of Nova Scotia, and among them those who in earlier days were opposed to Confederation. (Applause.)

Now let me pass to another point, I have been asked a hundred times if I have been asked once, by people I have met and who belong to the Province of Ontario, "Why has Nova Scotia not developed to a greater degree than she has since 1867?" This is a very difficult question to answer. It is a very interesting problem to think and talk about, but it is impossible for me to answer that question. We have often asked it of ourselves, so we don't object to the question if asked by others. There are many reasons contributing: in

part historical, in part political, accident and heredity have played a part, and I suppose had I time I might suggest other causes contributory. Let me put to you as briefly as I can the conditions, commercially, preceding Confederation. In the first place, our natural resources were then plentiful and cheaply produced. Then again, in the pioneering days the wants of these people were simple, there was sufficient labor for the population, and we retained our natural increase of population. We had then wooden shipping in plentiful numbers, cheaply constructed and manned by Nova Scotians. We had our transportation agents throughout the world, and did a great deal of the carrying trade for the countries of the world. Again, we were the makers of our own tariff, and you can understand that it was a very easy thing in a small province like Nova Scotia to make a tariff adjustable to the needs of that particular day. Again, our trade relations with the West Indies and the United States were very good, and with these countries we were doing a very great deal of trade. We were comparatively a prosperous people, and at least I may venture the statement that at that time nobody was asking why was not the Crown colony of Nova Scotia increasing in population. There is this further to be remembered about the province, especially when compared with Ontario, that territorially we are very small, but half the size of England, one-third less than Scotland, with a population now of 483,000, about 120,000 greater than in 1867. Such, in my judgment, were the conditions prevalent before Confederation. I only speak of what was told me, because I was born a Canadian myself, and was not made one by the British North America Act of 1867.

At Confederation the Provincial tariff necessarily dislocated our trade channels and changed the classes of our trade. Again, wooden shipping declined, not only in Nova Scotia but throughout the world. Our trade and commerce was naturally affected by these conditions. Our trade relations with the United States changed, because the old Reciprocity Treaty, which ended just before Confederation, was followed by a high tariff in the United States that had the effect naturally of destroying quite considerably our trade.

There is this other fact:—pre-Confederation conditions made Nova Scotians, I think, a trading as distinguished from a commercial and industrial people. We were not an industrial people before Confederation; we were a trading people, that was about all we did. A more commercial and industrial people would be quick to retrieve the losses incident to the dislocation of their usual business. But we did not obtain new markets. We lack the instinctive commercial aggressive-

ness which the people of Ontario possess. Some think that is a good thing; some think that commercialism is objectionable. I don't imagine I would get a cheer if I attempted to preach a doctrine of that kind, and I am not going to do it. (Laughter.)

Development was prevented somewhat for the want of transportation facilities to get into other provinces if we had anything to sell. You remember the Intercolonial Railroad was to be built as one of the terms of Confederation. It was built, but it landed nowhere that it was actually of practical importance to get. Still my opinion is, that if the Intercolonial had been, in the early days of Confederation, constructed by a corporation and by it operated, there would have been closer relations between the people and the railway, and a fuller realization of their common interests. It was an insurmountable condition connected with a Government-owned and operated railroad at that stage of its history. I do not say whether I would suggest the advisability of a change now, but I wish that the aggressiveness and ambition of a corporate railroad system had been available for connecting the Maritime with the other provinces at the union or shortly after, for then the commercial history of Nova Scotia would have been very much different.

In consequence of these conditions, and the lack of industrial life, there followed a period of emigration from the province. Naturally a large number went to the United States, where to-day there are several hundred thousands, I believe, of the sons and daughters of Nova Scotians residing. Then there came in the history of Canada that period when the provinces generally were holding their own population, and immigrants came. It was only natural that the first signs of national development should be seen in the larger provinces of Ontario and Quebec. These two were larger, and stronger in every respect, and the immigration worked to the disadvantage—such always has been history—of the smaller provinces, the Maritime Provinces. And we continued to lose our population. Our emigration from the Province of Nova Scotia hereafter was not so large to the United States as to Western Canada. And the emigration from Nova Scotia to this part of Canada still continues.

Now, Mr. Chairman, there is just one matter I would like to refer to in that connection—Western emigration. The emigration from Nova Scotia to the United States was regrettable and unavoidable. We are losing many sons and daughters to the West, but I think it is neither regrettable nor avoidable. We hear a great many people complain of the

emigration of the young people to the West. Instead, I regard it as a matter for Provincial and national congratulation. Charles Dickens once said that an Anglo-Saxon would refuse admittance to Heaven unless he had an undertaking that he could move west if he wanted to. (Laughter.) This is true of Canada. A nation, like a child, has its formative period, and the best impressions are made by the first settlers; therefore it was very important that they should be good settlers, so that British traditions and British ideals of justice in government and civil liberty should be planted before the great influx of immigration, which has been coming in in recent years and will continue for years to come. It was very desirable that Eastern Canada should blaze the trail, but it is just as important to trail the blaze, as they too are doing, and I hope will still do in the future! (Applause.) The people who have lost their sons for this purpose, I say, are rendering a great service to the nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker (Laughter)—Mr. President, there might be and are many things which I would like to refer to, but I find my time is rapidly going, and I must close. You may ask me, "What of the future of Nova Scotia?" I say, it is hopeful! The star of her commercial and industrial development is on the horizon, and I believe will shine forth with great splendor. There is nothing, in my judgment, to prevent it. There were reasons for our lack of development in the past, but these impediments are passing away, and we are coming to a time when conditions are favorable to development. Our geography and our maritime position, which once militated against us, will be instruments operating in our favor in the future. We have a splendid homogeneous population, an excellent climate, intelligent labor, our methods of agriculture are improving, by means of technical schools we are endeavoring to educate our young people in industries. For these and many other reasons, I believe the Province of Nova Scotia will soon see a development which will give her that commercial importance and eminence which I believe you people of Ontario would like her to have. (Applause.)

But whether we get it or not, I shall assure you, gentlemen, that you will find Nova Scotians always willing in the future as in the past to contribute everything in their power to solve all social, political, national and imperial problems which come before this country for solution, always willing to play their part in the national development of the country.