

P

6012

1896

I3



3 9004 01376068 8

SIR CHARLES TUPPER, Bart., •

AND THE

Unification of the Empire

BY AN IMPERIAL FEDERATIONIST.

Price, 10 Cents.

PRINTED BY

T. C. ALLEN & Co., HALIFAX, N. S.

1896.



F5012

1856 I 3

SIR CHARLES TUPPER, BART.,

AND

THE UNIFICATION OF THE EMPIRE.

In 1866 Hon. Joseph Howe published a pamphlet entitled ‘The Organization of the Empire’ (London, Edward Stamford, 6 Charing Cross). Mr. Howe clearly showed the dangers of our present status and boldly outlined a scheme for general defence and for colonial representation and contributions to the imperial services. He even urged that the imperial government should ask the colonies for an early answer to an offer of reciprocal rights and obligations:—

“At all events if there are any communities of British origin anywhere, who desire to enjoy all the privileges and immunities of the Queen’s subjects without paying for and defending them, let us ascertain where and who they are—let us measure the proportions of political repudiation now, in a season of tranquillity—when we have leisure to gauge the extent of the evil and to apply correctives, rather than wait till war finds us unprepared and leaning upon presumptions in which there is no reality.”

To this pamphlet Sir Charles (then Dr.) Tupper printed a reply, in which, by the way, he slightly garbled the stately period which has just been quoted. From this reply, which was published in pamphlet form as well as in the Halifax “British Colonist” of December 11, 1866, I shall make a few extracts:—

“LETTER FROM THE HON. G. TUPPER. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, &c.

TO THE PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA:

My Fellow Countrymen,—

“Having been called, under the free institutions which we enjoy, to take a leading part in the administration of the public affairs of my native Province, and charged by the Legislature, as I and my co-delegates now here have been, to promote the Union of British America, I think it my duty to draw your attention to a very extraordinary proposal which the Honorable Joseph Howe has recently published, and in which all classes of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia are vitally interested.

* * * * *

“Mr. Howe modestly asks the British Cabinet to ignore the action of the Governments and constitutional representatives of Provinces numbering nearly four millions of inhabitants, and at his sole instance to propose a Colonial policy still more objectionable than that which lost the American States to the British Crown, and which is now universally condemned.

* * * * *

“It will thus be seen, that Mr. Howe proposes that a merely nominal representation in the House of Commons should be given to the British Colonies enjoying Responsible Government, and that in exchange, the most despotic (!) power should be exercised over the revenues and manhood of these Colonies. Apparently

enamoured with the system adopted in despotic countries, Mr. Howe proposes to reduce the British Colonists to the position of a Russian 'serf'. It would be impossible to conceive a scheme more oppressive or unjust. It would give to the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick a representation in the House of Commons equal to that now enjoyed by the electors of four small Boroughs in Great Britain, and that in return for sacrifices such as no British subject is now called upon to endure. For the honour of having one single representative in the British Parliament, the three hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants of Nova Scotia would not only be called upon to suffer an enormous (*Mr. Howe argued the contributions of Colonists should be less per head than those of Englishmen for several reasons*) amount of annual taxation, but the person of every man in the Colony would be liable to be drafted at an hour's notice (*not unless Londoners became equally liable*) to fight the battles of Great Britain in India, or any other part of the world. But apart from the monstrous absurdity of such a proposition, it is founded upon palpable fallacies. Mr. Howe assumes in the first place that the colonies now contribute nothing to the defence of the Empire. He says (Page 13.) 'If we go to war, the whole burthen of sustaining it falls upon these two small Islands.' (Page 26.) 'I see no reason why the Colonies should not contribute in peace and in war their fair quotas towards the defence of the Empire.' He speaks of the 'ignorance and selfishness to be overcome' in getting a fair contribution to the defence of the Empire, and boldly propounds the policy of coercion (*correctives are not necessarily coercive*) if his scheme be not adopted by the Colonies.

(*Dr. Tupper's moral eclipse is so complete that he does not see that in condemning Joseph Howe's fair and generous sentiments he is condemning himself.*)

* * * * *

"British Colonists recognize the same obligations to contribute both men and money to the defence of that portion of the Empire in which they live, as the inhabitants of these islands, and in all the Colonies enjoying representative institutions they are loyally discharging that duty."

(Imagine the inhabitants of the British Islands sharing in the narrow imperial sentiments of Dr. Tupper and only recognizing their "obligations to contribute men and money to the defence of *that portion of the Empire in which they live!*" Were not this Tupperian idea of reciprocal aid repudiated to-day by Britons from Cape Breton to British Columbia and from Melbourne to Cape Town, it were woe for the Empire in its time of need.)

* * * * *

"Mr. Howe says, 'he would proceed to treat the whole Empire as the British Islands are now treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in war, and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the national defence.' Yet his scheme leaves the British Islands in the same position which they and the Colonies alike (!) now occupy, and proposes a system of serfdom for the Colonies alone, which not only does not (*the negative here must not be taken historically—it is a mere rhetorical particle*) exist, but would never be tolerated in Great Britain. Surely a gentleman who proposes to teach the Statesmen and Parliament of England how to organize and protect the Empire, ought to know that not a free man in the British Islands is liable to conscription, nor a pound's worth of property exposed to be levied upon for any purpose save as specially provided for by an enactment made by the Parliament of their country.

(Some of Dr. Tupper's sophistries are almost laughable. If Mr. Howe's proposal were adopted "to treat the whole Empire as the British Islands are now treated", how could the Colonies be more exposed to conscription or despotic levies than those Islands? Or how could Colonists be more like "Russian serfs" than are Englishmen?)

"In the confident belief that the enlightened statesmen who control the destinies of the Empire will treat with the contempt which it deserves, this audacious proposal to substitute the despotism of France and Russia, for the free constitutional system which has made British institutions the envy of the world,

I remain,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

CHARLES TUPPER.

London, November 23rd, 1866."

Without dwelling on the misrepresentations and sad demagoguery of this appeal to penurious instincts, which, among other things, represented the acquirement of fuller rights and responsibilities as a relapse towards serfdom, I will pass to Sir Charles Tupper's connection with the Imperial Federation League. At the first Conference for its foundation, held in London, July 29, 1884, at which Lord Rosebery and the Right Hon. W. E. Forster and many other influential British and Colonial statesmen were present, a proposed resolution to the effect that confederation was needed to prevent the dismemberment of the Empire was withdrawn through the arguments and pleadings of Sir Charles Tupper. Here Sir Charles, consciously or unconsciously, did an injury to the cause which he *now* was professing to favour. Such a resolution, adopted by such an influential meeting, would have had an awakening, if not a startling, effect throughout the great Colonies. It would have forced the project for federation upon the attention of the British people at home and abroad, and gained for it an early and full discussion. The result might have been that the Empire would have been strengthened as Howe and Haliburton foresaw that it required to be strengthened—so strengthened perhaps as to have averted the dangerous bluffing of Mr. Blaine in the Bering Sea controversy and the late preposterous extension of the Monroe Doctrine.

Sir Charles Tupper, however, announced himself to be an imperial federationist, became a member of the Council of the League and even of its Executive Committee, and his occasional after-dinner eulogies of the Empire won him the good will of many imperialistic noblemen and gentlemen. Whether his creed was orthodox or not, he certainly took a front seat in the synagogue. One unhappy result of this was to alarm too many simple-minded Liberals in Canada. Without an effort to understand it, they pronounced the mooted federation to be a Tupperian scheme or "a Tory dodge". Most Liberal newspapers kept their readers in total ignorance as to the nature and progress of the movement, only naming it to sneer at it as a dream or pooh-pooh it as a fad. A few Liberal politicians debated, not the expediency of progressing from a subordinate to a coördinate status, but the expediency of reading the progressists out of the reform party! It would be less inconsistent for Sir Charles to read federationists out of his party, for according to him (in 1866) they are not progressists at all, but backsliders, yearning for the position of Russian serfs.

Before many years passed from the foundation of the League, Sir Charles began to explain *his* notion of imperial federation, to the satisfaction of some murmuring French Canadians and of many English Canadians who preferred dependency to full national life, and the saving of one cent in the dollar to rendering the other ninety-nine cents more secure. In several speeches and lectures he advertised, with much ability, the services of Canada to the Empire. He did not content himself, as some other equally sound Canadians and sounder federationists have done, with urging that the expense of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the militia, etc., should be reckoned as assets in determining Canada's contribution, if she should decide on federating with the British Islands. He claimed that her contribution was complete. He wished Canada to occupy an anomalous position (half-dependent, half-equal) in a hybrid federation, with preferential duties, with the right to make commercial treaties, with a maimed kind of representation; but it must not cost a cent to Canada. He wanted some more "get" and no more "give". His theory of imperial federation appealed to the

cupidity of Canadians, as the reciprocal theory of Howe and Grant and Parkin appealed to their justice and manliness.

English federationists and English papers in favor of unifying the Empire generally either ignored Sir Charles Tupper's heterodoxy or else treated it with gentleness, for fear of offending Canada. Indeed Sir Charles seems to have produced upon some Englishmen the impression that he carried the Dominion in his pocket. But there were several mild protests:—

‘It is nothing short of *disgraceful* that Canada should accept British consular aid, British supremacy on the seas, British backing in the Behring Sea question, without paying one penny towards the Imperial Defence which is behind all these things.’ (Ottawa “*Anglo-Saxon*”, quoted by “*Imperial Federation*”, Aug. 1, 1893.)

Commenting on the above, the organ of the Imperial Federation League observes:—

“That is the view, we know, held by many true Federationists in Canada as elsewhere. We ourselves, and we believe we may say all those who think with us in the Mother Country on the general subject of Colonial contributions to Imperial expenses, do not, as it is sometimes alleged, find fault with Canada for what she has done or left undone up to the present time, for the very simple reason that neither she nor any other Colony has ever been asked to do otherwise. We should not therefore agree with the *Anglo-Saxon* if its strictures are meant to be retrospective. We should agree with it if its strictures refer to those who seek prospectively to prevent Canada being invited to bear her due share of Imperial burdens, and counsel her to decline such an invitation if given, by setting up the untenable plea that she is bearing her due share already. That is a note that has been sounded somewhat loudly just lately.”

The italics are mine.

In September of the same year (1893) Sir Charles delivered a speech in Winnipeg, on which “*Imperial Federation*,” in its issue for November, 1893, thus comments:—

“In another column we publish the bulk of a speech made by Sir Charles Tupper, at Winnipeg, in which he reiterates his frequently expressed opinions as to the obligations of Canada in respect of Imperial Defence. The following extract, coupled with the published speeches of some of the leaders of the Imperial Federation League in Canada, serves to show that the particular views held on this point by Sir Charles Tupper are by no means universal among Canadians, whether believers in Imperial Federation or not, any more than they are among the leading supporters of the League in the Mother Country, or, we may add, in Australia. Sir Charles Tupper himself admits in the abstract the principle that Canada and all other portions of the Empire ought to contribute to the defence of the Empire, but claims that Canada already does so, by indirect means, to the full extent of her obligation, and should not in fairness be asked to do more. To avoid misconstruction we must repeat, what we have had occasion to say often before, that those who differ from this latter view do not on that account attach any blame to Canada or Canadians for not having hitherto done that which they have never been officially invited to do, and which, if invited, they would have a perfect right to decline to do, unless the invitation to share in the responsibilities of Empire were accompanied by a corresponding invitation to share constitutionally in its privileges.

“Commenting on the speech referred to, the *Toronto Week* says:—‘Sir Charles Tupper has taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by a banquet given in his honour by the Manitoba Club, at Winnipeg, to make a valuable contribution to the discussion of the question, which he at least seems to think still a living one, of Imperial Federation. Sir Charles’s speech, which was marked by his usual ability and force, deals mainly with two controverted points. He opposes with great energy the view, which we venture to say is that of not a few Colonists, that, as such, they occupy an inferior position—‘humiliating’, the word he used, is rather strong. Some of the arguments he brought forward in refutation of this opinion do not seem quite convincing. In fact, they appear to imply the very thing they are intended to disprove. Such, for instance, is his reply to

the statement that as Colonists we have no voice in the direction of the foreign affairs of the great Empire of which we form a component part. On the contrary, says Sir Charles, 'it is open to everyone in Canada to become a citizen of the Empire as it is to those born in the city of London. If my coachman is taken from Canada and lives one year in my stable in London, he has as good a vote as the Duke of Westminster, and has the same voice in public affairs as if born within the bounds of Great Britain'. What does this mean if not that residence in Canada is incompatible with having a voice in the affairs of the Empire, and that in order to obtain such voice one has to cease to be a Canadian and to become a resident of Great Britain, which is the very thing complained of? Again, Sir Charles waxes eloquent over the selection of representative Canadians to take part in negotiations with other nations, and thinks that 'the time has come when Canada may justly feel proud of the fact that the services of her sons are sought on important occasions'. We will not stay to point out that in every instance adduced Canadian interests were specially involved, but we cannot refrain from observing that the very fact that these selections are made as a matter of courtesy, and are regarded as a special compliment for which Canadians are expected to be grateful, proves the fact that Canadian citizenship is not British citizenship, so far as giving an equal voice in the affairs of the Empire is concerned.

"Let us hasten to add, lest our feeling be misconstrued, that we do not think that the disabilities pointed out afford any just ground for complaint. They are, we believe, inseparable from the colonial position. We do not see how any nation could safely go farther in the direction of admitting a Colony to a position of equality in the Empire than the Mother Country has gone in the case of Canada. The fact remains, and must ever remain, that a Colony is a Colony and a Colonist a Colonist, and that the only way of escape from whatever inequalities may be necessarily involved in the relation is to cease to be a Colony and Colonists. This would involve constitutional change, which Sir Charles very strongly deprecates. He would not have our constitution changed in any material respect, even for representation in the Imperial Parliament. From what follows he evidently regards such representation as incompatible with the independent management of our own affairs, which many will fail to see. That Sir Charles should be greatly enamoured with our present Colonial condition is hardly a matter for wonder when we consider his views in regard to the other chief matter with which he dealt in his speech, that of our duty, under the proposed Imperial Federation, in regard to defence. His ardent advocacy of the view that Canada should not be called on to pay any part of the expenses of the Imperial army and navy is well known. So also, in its general features, is the argument he uses in support of that view—viz., that in constructing our canals and our transcontinental railway, in subsidizing our steamboat lines, etc., all for commercial purposes, we really have done well and liberally our share for the support of the defences of the Empire. This curious view is carefully wrought out. We need not stay to analyze the argument, but it is scarcely to be wondered at that our High Commissioner has hitherto failed to carry the British taxpayer, or his representatives, with him in his view of this important question—a question which meets the advocates of Imperial Federation on the threshold."

Earlier in the same year, as will be seen from the subjoined extract, Sir Charles had dealt a more effective, if a dirtier, blow to his fellow members of the League whose unselfish aim was to insure and strengthen our British Empire by making colonists full-fledged Britons in spirit, in representation and in contribution:—

(From "*The Empire*," Feb. 21, 1893).

Montreal, Feb. 20.—The following letter from the Canadian High Commissioner in London was read before the recent meeting of the Canadian branch of the Imperial Federation League at the Windsor Hotel (Montreal):

"VICTORIA CHAMBERS, 17 VICTORIA ST.,
London, S. W., January, 1893.

To Casimir Dickson, Esq:

My Dear Sir,—The pressure of important questions which I could not defer has prevented my dealing earlier with your letter of November last. When you remember that the Council of the Imperial Federation League embraces many strong free traders you will see how impossible it must be at once to obtain unanimity in a proposal for preferential duties within the Empire, and how important it was to obtain from all the committee what is contained in sections 36, 37 of the report.

Knowing as I do, that the most active members of the Imperial Federation League were *mainly intent on levying a large contribution on the revenues of the colonies* for the support of the army and navy of Great Britain, I am delighted to have been able, almost single-handed, to obtain such a report from such a committee. Unfortunately they captured Mr. Parkin, and, having used him here, are now *using him in Canada to create the false impression that we do nothing to maintain the defence of the empire*, instead of showing, as he truthfully could, that we have entitled ourselves to the gratitude of every man who has the interest of the empire at heart.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES TUPPER."

The sections of the Imperial Federation League Committee's report, which Sir Charles was "delighted to have been able, almost single-handed, to obtain," read as follows:—

"36. Among the measures which, if not at first practicable, might become more so with the growth of a feeling of permanent national unity, the most important would be those connected with the fuller developement of inter-imperial trade and the removal of existing hindrances thereto due to tariff arrangement.

"37. The course of events may remove the obstacles at present retarding the interchange of commodities between the countries which constitute the empire. The sense of the permanence of the political union would naturally induce the people of the various countries in the empire to make, for the sake of strengthening the union, fiscal arrangements, which, under existing circumstances, they are not prepared to adopt."

Sir Charles's self-congratulation at these evasive sections is strange. To an ordinary mind they seem to give a polite snub to his pet scheme, indicating its possible fulfilment after, but not before, a federation of the Empire. This interpretation is confirmed by the last paragraph of a letter from the Secretary of the Imperial Federation League to the Secretary of the Canadian League,* which was read at the same meeting:—

"Without any desire to triumph over those who have differed from me, especially in Canada, I would ask you to read Lord Salisbury's emphatic and unmistakable expression as to the impossibility of putting a duty upon corn in this country, which he introduced into his speech at Liverpool on the 4th inst. If this be brought to the notice of those who still pin their faith to preferential trade, I cannot but think that they will be convinced of the fallacy which attaches to it.

Yours very truly,

ARTHUR H. LORING."

Casimir Dickson, Esq.

Of the two passages which I have italicised in Sir Charles's letter it is hard to say which is the most slanderous. Mr. Parkin is not a man to be "used to create" any "false impression." I have heard him before a large audience, expatiating on the indirect contributions of Canada to the strength of the Empire. But he never stooped to drug the consciences of his countrymen into the "false" and anti imperial "impression" that their contributions were complete and final. The imputation of Sir Charles that the main motive of the most active members of the Imperial Federation League (of such men as Lord Rosebery, Admiral Colomb, Lord Playfair or Sir Rawson Rawson) was to screw money out of the Colonies instead of to secure the integrity and safety of the whole Empire, was an unworthy insinuation. Coming

*A majority of Canadian federationists were apparently for the adoption of duties discriminating in favour of the federating partners. This fact, added to the lack of information on the subject in most of our newspapers, has caused many Canadians to confuse the Imperial Federation League with the widely different United Empire Trade League.

from a professed imperialist, and a prominent member of the executive of the League, it was a weakening wound to the cause. It numbed the enthusiasm of its supporters in Canada and caused dissensions in the central League. These dissensions, fomented by the subsequent utterances of Sir Charles and his following, led to several secret deliberations of the Council, which, finding itself hopelessly divided and not wishing to antagonize Canada by snubbing her High Dictator, voted to dissolve the League at the close of the year 1893. I do not charge Sir Charles Tupper with voting for the death of the League, but for its death there is no man more responsible than he.

In May, 1894, the Imperial Federation League being now defunct, Sir Charles read before the Royal Colonial Institute an able paper entitled "Canada in relation to the Unity of the Empire." Some of his propositions were criticised by Col. Sir George Clarke, Mr. Parkin and others, but especially by Admiral Sir John Colomb, who argued that the C. P. R. (captured by an enemy) might become a source of weakness instead of strength to the Empire. In the course of his strictures he observed:—

"There is a true and a false Imperialism, and I say it is a false Imperialism for our great colonies to refuse to look their obligations in the face. It means peril and disaster in time of war. The point I wish to make is this—that if Canada were to join the United States or to become an independent nation, she would have to pay for defence far more heavily than she does now. Now, let us compare the great Dominion with insignificant Switzerland. Switzerland has a population of under three millions; Canada has a population of five millions; Switzerland has a revenue of three and three-quarter millions; Canada has a revenue of seven and a quarter millions; on defence Switzerland pays £1,200,000 a year, while Canada pays only £282,000 a year. Thus Switzerland pays 32 per cent. of her revenue for defence, and Canada does not pay 4 per cent., while the United Kingdom pays 35 per cent. of her revenue for the defence of the Empire."

Towards the close of this meeting, it is fair to say, Sir Charles made a statement which modifies, if it contradicts, his more demagogic utterances on the subject: "When I referred to the services Canada has rendered to the unity and strength of the Empire by various measures taken since the confederation, I mentioned them not as a full discharge of the obligations of Canada to the Empire, but as an earnest and as the best possible evidence of what she would be prepared to do in the future." *If he had sent an expression of this sentiment to the Canadian Federation meeting a year earlier, instead of maligning the motives of his fellow members who had been expressing similar sentiments, the Imperial Federation League would doubtless be alive and active still.

Perhaps enough has been said by others about the action of Sir Charles which is thus recorded in Whitaker's Almanack for 1892 under the apt heading of "Remarkable Occurrences":—

"Feb. 18 (1891). Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper, at Toronto, charged Canadian Liberals with treason and conspiring to annex Canada to the United States."

*It would not seem that Sir Charles remained long in this quasi-repentant mood. In the *Canadian Magazine* for February, 1896, he has an article extolling the past and present services of Canada to the Empire, with never a hint as to her further obligations in the future. The object of his article appears to be to kill the Imperial Federation Defence League—a maimed offspring of the slain Imperial Federation League, of too limited a scope to fire imperial enthusiasm. The motto of those desiring to unify the Empire, in my humble opinion, should be "thorough"—full citizenship, full obligations, full responsibilities, full representation, full rights, full privileges, and full home rule for every federating partner.

This charging the disloyal sentiments of two or three individuals to a loyal party cannot be justified. Although some genuine imperialists shared the responsibility of that wholesale accusation, its natural tendency was not to inspire and unite the friends of the Empire, but to inspire and unite its foes. For this accusation let us charitably hope that Sir Charles's repentance is sincere.

* * * *

Sir Charles Tupper has proclaimed that his coming campaign will be fought (partly) for our Imperial interests.

I could serve with more enthusiasm under some leader who had never worked, consciously or unconsciously, against the unification of the Empire—under a Howe (*par excellence*) or a Macdonald or a Thompson or a Laurier. But if Sir Charles Tupper has repented in the eleventh hour; if he should appeal more to honour and justice and patriotism than to penurious instincts; if he should advocate for us a square reciprocity of rights and obligations; if his desire should be to enlarge our issues, to broaden our thoughts, and to remove the millstone of provincialism from the bowed neck of our intellectual progress; if he should wish Britons to confederate in the spirit of Howe and Haliburton, for the strengthening of the Empire and the attainment of full imperial citizenship by Canadians; if he should urge Canada to ask for imperial representation *with* a fair imperial contribution, and to claim a coördinate instead of her subordinate status; then, if his propaganda is opposed by the Liberal party, he shall have my voice and vote. And further, if, as I do not anticipate myself, †the insular pride and conservatism of Great Britain should hesitate to give us full representation at Westminster, I will fight in the ranks of Sir Charles against that insular pride and conservatism.

But if Sir Charles is only going to strain our relations with the mother country by trying to dictate a selfish policy which free-trade Britain must refuse, unless she sacrifices her principles to her affections; if he proposes an unattainable arrangement to rally his divided followers and win the votes of unreflecting loyalists; if he asks Canada to apply, *in forma pauperis*, for admission to a mongrel federation; if he is merely mouthing phrases about the unity of our grand Empire while remaining ready to stab, as heretofore, sincerer patriots who dissent from his stingy and parasitic imperialism; then all true loyalists should stand by the party whose British policy invites and encourages British trade. And, oh, that in this crisis that party were guided by the spirit, the patriotic and decisive spirit, of Joseph Howe.

†There is doubtless a large section of the Conservative party in England which would object to the United Kingdom resigning its chieftainship in the Empire by sharing with the Colonies the control of the imperial establishments and policy. But if the great Colonies asked for full partnership, that section, I believe, would be overpowered. It would be opposed by the more progressive portion of the Conservative party and by practically all the Liberals. It was the supposed indifference of the (till lately unaroused) Colonies that caused the apparent reluctance of most Englishmen to pronounce for the unification of the Empire. Mr. Labouchere, who has always pooh-pooed imperial federation, observes (writing as "Scrutator" in *Truth*, November 14, 1895): "In this country there are many who would strengthen the tie that binds our Colonies to us. In the Colonies there are none. An Australian, for instance, looks at the matter from an Australian standpoint, and he would be a fool if he did not. As things stand, he has the best of the bargain."

