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See Memo to Macdonald
April 21/66.
97-57

Confidential

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Special Memorandum

The Governor General desires to lay before the Members of the Executive Council the strong opinion he entertains as to the imperative necessity which exists for concluding what remains to be done in the Canadian Parliament in order to complete the plan for the Union of the Provinces during the present Session.

The reasons which have produced this conviction in the mind of the Governor General are derived partly from the effect which the course that may now be adopted will have

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on the fate of the measure both in the other Provinces and in England and partly from the peculiar constitution of the present Government of Canada and the circumstances under which it was originally formed.

The advance in public opinion which has appeared both in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia proves that an early accomplishment of the subject is possible.

This Province has hitherto always taken the lead on the subject and the Governor General cannot help thinking that a bad moral effect will be produced in New Brunswick if this Session is allowed to pass without concluding

Canada's portion of the scheme.

The Governor General will not conceal from the Council that he also entertains apprehensions of the effect on the public mind both in Upper and Lower Canada of allowing the unfinished scheme to continue still a matter of public discussion and criticism after the adoption of the principle by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It shall have rendered its final success so much more nearly approaching to a matter of certainty than it has hitherto been.

There are not wanting in the public press indications that this danger is not imaginary.

The Governor General also is strongly of opinion that

advantage should be taken of the probability of a very late Session of the Imperial Parliament this year to secure to secure the passage of the Act of Union in England this year.

Should the present Session of the Canadian Parliament be allowed to pass without dealing with the questions which still remain unsettled this will be impossible even if there should be - which seems far from improbable an Autumn Session of the Imperial Parliament.

The Governor General may add that it is within his own knowledge that the Secretary of State expects that the work referred to shall be done in the present Session

These are some of the grounds connected with the fate of the measure of Union upon which the Governor General has formed the opinion that this Session should not pass without witnessing the completion of the scheme.

There were also circumstances connected with the formation of the present Administration which make the Governor General feel himself personally bound to press upon the Council his views on this point.

The coalition of parties which was formed in 1864 was - at least in some measure - brought about by the exercise on certain parties to that measure of the personal influence of the Governor General. When

that influence was used the Governor General felt that he was in some measure overstepping the strict line of his Constitutional duties. He trusted however to the importance of the object sought to be gained as a sufficient excuse for the steps which he then took. The Administration which was then formed was constituted avowedly for the purpose of pressing at the earliest possible moment the measure for the Union of the Provinces.

It was for this purpose alone that the Liberal section of the Cabinet yielded to the Governor General's persuasion

to join the Administration
and it is for this reason
that the Governor General
feels personally bound, not
only to that section of the
Government but to the
people of the Province, to
press for the speedy completion
of the plan of Union.

The Governor General in
addition desires to remind
the Council that the Session
was postponed to this late
period of the year avowedly
in reference to the course
which it might be desirable
to take on this question

Ottawa
June 6th 1866.

19834

Memorandum of

H. E. The Governor General

Necessity of completing
the Confederation measure
during present session
by Canadian Parliament.

read in Council
6th / Mar 1866.

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