

House of Assembly

FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORTS.

TUESDAY APRIL 5. UNION OF THE PROVINCES. SPEECH OF MR. MILLER.

Mr. MILLER said—I rise, Mr. Speaker, to address the House on a question of the deepest importance to the people of this country—a question in comparison with which all other public questions may be truly said to sink into insignificance—I mean the great question of British Colonial Union. If, sir, the subject was less important than it is, I would not venture, as I now do, to trespass on the attention of hon. gentlemen in reference to it, in the absence of any motion before this House. The course I am about to adopt is the result of much deliberation, and I shall bring myself within the rules of the House by making an enquiry of the Government before I resume my seat. Sir, on no occasion during my comparatively short professional and public career, have I risen to address any body of men impressed with a deeper sense of the grave responsibilities of my position than I now feel. But, on the other hand, I can truly say, on no occasion involving public responsibilities, have I been animated by stronger convictions of the propriety of the step I am about to take than I am at this moment.

For the past two years, Mr. Speaker, the question of an Union of the British North American Provinces has been before the people of this country, and I need hardly state my views have obtained some publicity, and myself some prominence, in opposition to the Quebec scheme of Confederation. To that scheme, I believe it to be unjust to the people of the Maritime Provinces in some of its most important features. I believe to force it upon us, without important modifications, would retrace the end it is intended to promote, the permanency of British Institutions on this continent. These were my opinions in 1864. They have undergone no change. They are my opinions to-day.

But, sir, it is well known to this House and to the people of the country, that, notwithstanding the strenuous and unwavering opposition I have given to the Quebec scheme of confederation, I have invariably declared myself in favor of an equitable union of these colonies. During the agitation of this question, I have spoken on it in Parliament and at Public Meetings, in several counties of this Province, and no where have I failed to express in unequivocal language my desire for union on fair terms. I can appeal to those who have listened to me in both extremes of Nova Scotia, whether in Cape Breton or in Lunenburg, in support of this assertion. But, sir, I can appeal to something stronger, if the consistency of my conduct in this Legislature is called in question—I can appeal to the official records of this House. I can go even further and appeal to the gentlemen with whom I have conversed for the last eighteen months in opposition to the scheme of the Quebec Conference, many of whom are opposed to all union, and who will bear me ready witness that any co-operation in the anti-union movement in this Province, has only extended to the details of that scheme. The subject of an union of British America, since I have been capable of forming a judgment on the question, has found favor with me. Apart from the material advantages of such an union, there is something in the assurance of national strength and greatness to be derived from it, which is in sympathy with the best feelings and aspirations of every British American whose future is wrapped up with the future of this country. For years past I have entertained a strong opinion on the subject, an opinion that the period was fast approaching, when these North American colonies must cast off their present political habiliments, and assume others more consistent with their advanced position, their surroundings, and their altered relations to the Empire. I was in favor of their political union before the subject was presented to the country in any tangible shape. I am in favor of it now, after having given the question much attention and thought, and after the bitter and prolonged agitation it has produced in this Province. The first opinion I publicly expressed in favor of it, was in the debate in this House on the resolution introduced in 1864, by the hon. Provincial Secretary for a union of the maritime provinces; when I am currently reported to have used the following words:—

"If the resolution before the House contemplated an union of all the Provinces of British North America on equitable terms, no one could hail it with more satisfaction than myself. Such an Union he trusted, taking distant period would become both a commercial and political necessity. He looked forward hopefully to the day when the inhabitants of the noble Provinces, united under one government, might stand before the world in the broad national character of British Americans. From such an association they would indeed derive national strength, and directly worth some sacrifice to obtain. They would then possess a population and country whose future status and inevitable future destiny would command respect. An union of the Maritime Provinces and the great territory beyond would give us a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with all the diversified resources necessary to the most unlimited material progress. In favor of such a proposal most of the arguments urged in this debate would have real point and force, and not appear, as they now did, absurd or inapplicable."

From the above paragraph, Mr. Speaker, it will be seen, and indeed the fact is one of notoriety in this House, that before the Quebec scheme of Confederation was in existence, I had placed on record my decided approval of an union of British America, on equitable terms. I think I will have no difficulty in showing that though prominent in my opinion on the Quebec scheme of Union, I have always been favorable to the abstract idea of Union. My first appearance before the public in opposition to that scheme was at a mass meeting of the citizens of Halifax in December, 1864, about nine months after the above declaration in Parliament, and although I spoke under circumstances of much irritation, I did not allow any personal annoyance to draw me into any aspersion on the great principle of Colonial Union. Looking back, sir, to that occasion, and recollecting the excitement that marked it, I find no ordinary degree of satisfaction at the emphatic manner in which I preserved my consistency in the great principle involved in that decision. I said:—

"I do not wish, Mr. Mayor, that my appearance on this platform to-night should be construed into opposition to an Union of British America on fair terms. I am not opposed to it, but on the contrary, would support an Union based on sound principles, and equitable terms. But the more I investigated the subject, the more reason I had to fear that an equitable Union with Canada is not easily attainable. I am not willing to purchase Confederation on conditions disastrous to the people of Nova Scotia. These are the reasons why I oppose the measure by which Confederation is now to be secured. I cannot ratify the imprudent bargain our delegates have made, because

it is unjust to this Province. It is a bargain in which the advantages are all on one side, and all against us."

I repeat, sir, when I look back to the period at which these remarks were uttered—when I remember the excitement and personal animosity that marked, in some instances, the discussion of this subject in Temperance Hall, I am exceedingly gratified to-day, that no temporary provocation could induce me to denounce all union, as others did; but that I wisely contented myself with hostility to the particular scheme then under consideration. I do not deny that in the warmth of an exciting platform discussion I may not have used language that I—in times of greater coolness would not have uttered. But no candid man would think of binding another too strictly to every expression used before an excited popular assemblage, and the cheers of his friends, and the hisses of his opponents. It is only proper to recollect that everything I then said—every argument I advanced—was directed solely to the end of defeating the Quebec Resolutions. When the question came before the Legislature at a late period last session, I intended to have fully explained my position and views, but in common with a number of gentlemen on both sides—for reasons which will be found in the reported debates—I denied myself the pleasure of speaking on it at any length. In the few remarks I did make, however, I find the following decided reiteration of all my previous declarations:—

"If I have any desire for an union, it is for the larger one. The opinion I held last year I hold now. My opposition has not been to union in the abstract, but to the terms on which it was secured. I deny and wish to prove that I am opposed to an Union on equitable terms. Sir, I do not think I require to say a single word in addition to what is contained in the official records of this House, to show that from my first appearance in this Legislature up to the present time, I have been favorable to an union of these Provinces. I am chargeable with no sudden conversion to that opinion; nay, more, I am chargeable with no inconsistency in regard to it. Every one who understands the difference between the principle of a measure and its details, is well aware that in supporting the principle of any scheme a party does not commit himself to its details. The absurdity of any other assumption is too apparent to call for comment. In the same way, in opposing the details of a measure, it does not follow that we oppose its principle. I do not make these obvious remarks for gentlemen in this House, but for those elsewhere who may not so readily appreciate the distinction."

What, then, has been my position on this great question up to the present time? My position has been that of an uncompromising opponent of the Quebec scheme, yet an advocate of Union. While, however, my hostility to the Quebec resolutions has not diminished during the last eighteen months, the subject has been agitated, I am not prepared to assert that my attachment to the principle of Union during the same period, has not increased. Sir, I frankly admit that it has increased. I am more firmly convinced at the present moment than ever of the desirability of an Union of British America. These are many reasons to-day that did not exist two years ago, why every British American should desire an Union that would tend to consolidate the strength, develop the resources, protect the rights, and promote the mutual interests of these provinces. Sir, the Provinces of British North America are in an ordinary period of their history—and that man is heedless of the signs of the times—who is heedless of events that are daily and hourly transpiring around him, who exhibits indifference to, or affects to disregard danger in the present state of public affairs on this continent. I need not remind hon. gentlemen that the whole aspect of things around us has been changed within one short year. The neighboring republic, twelve months ago, was in the throes of a death-struggle, which threatened its disruption, has since emerged from the ordeal, claiming the reputation of one of the first military nations of the world. Her military prestige will not diminish the characteristic arrogance of her international policy. It will certainly not lessen her disposition to offensiveness in her intercourse with foreign nations; as it has increased her necessities, it will not lessen her desire to aggrandize herself at the expense of her neighbors. We have grounds of apprehension in this respect peculiar to ourselves. We know that the late war in America has created a feeling of animosity for some fancied grievances, among some classes of the American people towards Great Britain and these colonies. I need not specify these assumed grievances; they are familiar to every one. They may culminate at no distant day in a war between the two countries. They have already culminated in a species of commercial warfare, aimed at the prosperity of British America. Does any one doubt that the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty is intended partly as a punishment of these provinces, for their sympathy with the Southern States during the late struggle, and partly as an annoyance to Great Britain for her alleged bad faith as a neutral power. But, sir, there can be less doubt that it is chiefly relied on—I mean the repeal of the treaty, as a great means of fostering annexation sentiments in British North America; I shall prove this assertion presently beyond the possibility of doubt. Assuming it to be correct, is it not our duty to adopt such steps as may frustrate any such design? Now, sir, I ask what step is as likely to conduce to the result we have in view, as an union under one Government, which will give all these colonies a common policy, and a common platform of action? Isolation in relation to reciprocal trade in the present crisis, has peculiar dangers. It gives the Washington authorities complete command of the whole situation. It gives them the power of playing us off against each other, of exciting jealousies, producing dissensions, and creating interests which can have but one tendency. No Government under the sun more thoroughly understands that game than the Government of the United States. They will play it to our ruin and their own advantage, if we leave the cards in their hands. I do not wish to go further in connection with this view of the subject, but it has had a powerful influence on my mind. It affords a most weighty argument in favor of immediate union.

I have said that the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty is intended to produce annexation tendencies in British America. I think I can adduce evidence on this point so conclusive as to amount to a moral demonstration. Allow me in the first place, to revert to the history of the Commercial Congress held last summer in Detroit, representing the great mercantile interests of the U. States and B. America. Need I remind hon. gentlemen that on that occasion an important functionary of the Washington government—a gentleman

occupying the high position of American Consul at Montreal, the first city in British America, declared that he attended that Congress at the request of his government, and with authority to express their views and wishes with regard to reciprocal trade. He earnestly advised the abrogation of the treaty, and openly and insultingly told the colonial members of the Convention that the object of this policy was to produce the annexation of British America to the Republic. We have, then, the fact that Mr. Potter went to Detroit, declaring himself in the confidence of his government, and the exponent of their views, and we all know that his utterances have never been disproved by his masters; and we have the further most important fact that on the first meeting of Congress, the policy that gentleman foreshadowed as that of the Washington government was carried out. If, then, Mr. Potter was correct in foreshadowing the policy of his government, is not the conclusion irresistible that he was equally correct as to the wishes and motives that were at the foundation of that policy? These significant facts cannot fail to make a due impression on the mind of every man who desires to maintain our connection with the Empire; and they strongly confirm my convictions not only of the desirability but of the necessity of Union.

We know from the newspaper press of the United States that the question of an union of British America has attracted considerable attention in that country, and that the proposal is generally received with little partiality. Those journals especially noted for their violent antipathy towards everything British do not conceal their hostility to the measure, and the grounds of that hostility. We find that those who oppose union are applauded as the friends of annexation, while those who advocate it receive very different treatment. Let me treat the house to an extract from a journal marked for the violence and virulence of its abuse of Great Britain and these colonies—the N. Y. Herald—as indicative of the hopes entertained in that quarter as the inevitable result of a refusal on our part to unite, and concentrate our strength. The Herald of the 10th of March last, referring to the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty, says:—

"Meantime, the Provincials who have had a taste of the blessings of free trade with the Yankees, under this expiring Reciprocity Treaty, are called upon to consider the question of their annexation to the American Confederation under the free-royalty of a member of the family. This movement contemplates a consolidation, which has already been declined by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; but it is not thus to be abandoned. AN AGITATION WILL BE APT TO FOLLOW, WHICH IN DUE TIME WILL GRAVITATE TO THE EAST, NATURAL AND ADVANTAGEOUS SOLUTION OF ANNEXATION TO THE UNITED STATES."

Sir, there is something in this language, that should arrest the attention of every man not blinded by party or other unworthy feelings. What is the meaning of this "agitation" with which we are threatened? Is the repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty merely the initiation of a systematic design to undermine our allegiance and annex us? Have the Government of the United States their agents in this country for this purpose, as insinuated by the Herald? If they have, it will not long remain a secret, for the hour of action is at hand when we all must be judged by the sympathies we avow, and the company we keep. I am aware that no man would dare openly advocate annexation, but if there be any among us who desire it, they will take the more safe and insidious means of attaining their end by exciting disaffection on any pretext that will offer itself. The language of the Herald affords reasonable grounds for watchfulness, and it is only right that the country should be on its guard.

Now, sir, there is another consideration that has its just weight with me. The Imperial Government has spoken on this subject in terms not to be mistaken, and firmly and persistently urges on the people of British America the necessity for Union. I know there are persons who talk very flippantly of the interference of Colonial Secretaries or the British Government in our affairs. For my part, sir, while I would as readily as any one resist improper interference from any quarter in the public affairs of this Province, I would be sorry to deny the right of the Queen's Government to use its just influence and authority in all matters of Imperial concern. Much less would I dream of anything so absurd as to dispute its right to deal with any measure affecting the integrity of the Empire. On all questions of this character, I for one, am ready to yield the most respectful deference to this high authority. The desire of Her Majesty's Government for an union of the Colonies has received the most emphatic expression that could be given to it—it has been declared in three consecutive speeches from the Throne. Now, I ask this House, is there a colony under the crown that has greater reason to show deference to the just wishes of the British Government than the province of Nova Scotia? Sir, do I require to point to the evidences of Imperial solicitude for our safety and welfare that are before everybody's eyes? Walk out some fine morning and view the fortifications of this city, and get, as you can only get, an imperfect estimate of the immense treasure Great Britain has spent for the protection of this people. Visit that citadel, under whose shadow even now our numbers are undisturbed—visit Point Pleasant, George's Island, and a half dozen other places I could name. Extend your wanderings to the north end of this city, and see those magnificent structures—the Wellington Barracks, the Ordnance and Dockyards—and then you will have only a very faint idea of the amount of treasure Great Britain has lavished upon us. How much does the army, supported here for our protection, spend among us? In a few short weeks the harbor of Halifax will be alive with the wooden walls of England. Her brave tars will be on the spot to protect our interests, and leave their last dollar with our people. Should these things be forgotten or winked out of sight at the present time?

But, sir, it is not alone in this way Great Britain has shown its favor. She has not only done every thing for our protection and security, but she has given us the entire control of our local affairs. Responsible Government, and every liberty we enjoy having been got for the asking. Therefore, sir, as a Nova Scotian, I am ready to yield that deference to the wishes of the Imperial Government they have a right to expect. Their past treatment of this province is a guarantee that they desire to improve our condition by union. I have no hesitation in saying, that of all the dependencies of the Crown, Nova Scotia should be one of the most disposed to yield a deferential ear to Imperial suggestions.

It may be said, sir, that my practice is inconsistent with my professions—that for the last eighteen months I have been opposing the policy of the British Government. I deny the imputation—I have never opposed that policy—on the contrary, I have advocated it. I con-

sider there are only two classes in the Provinces who are in antagonism to the Imperial policy: those who are opposed to all union, and those, unwittingly so, yet equally hostile to that policy, who would force a scheme of union on the Maritime Provinces, which its opponents believe to be unjust, and its supporters know to be obnoxious to the great body of the people. Against that scheme public opinion has unmistakably pronounced, and if forced upon us the result will be the opposite to that desired. The British Government have no especial partiality for the Quebec scheme; they desire an equitable union of British America, and instead of opposing, I have always advocated such an union.

There are one or two other matters to which I shall allude before turning my attention to the question I intend to ask. A few days ago this House went through all the solemn forms of a Conference with the other branch of the Legislature on a subject, the importance of which is admitted by every one—I allude to the protection of our fisheries. What was the result of the deliberations of the joint committee of both Houses on that occasion? What means did they suggest for that great service? Their report has been placed on our table, and what does it advise? An humble petition to the Queen's Government, praying for assistance. In our necessities we rush to the Colonial Office for aid and protection, and yet there are those among us who deny any reciprocal duty on our part—any obligation even to listen respectfully to the wishes of British Ministers. We know that although we may buy a blockade runner, and vote a few thousand dollars for the service, our Fisheries can have no adequate protection if England refuses us her aid. Now, I ask, is it reasonable to expect a favorable answer to our petition if we refuse to comply, at such an important period in our history, with the request of Her Majesty's Government? Another subject to which I must refer, because its bearing on the question of Colonial Union is so palpable to escape the commonest observation. Every one will admit that the clouds impending over our political horizon at the present time may justly excite the most serious apprehensions. An organization at first regarded with contempt, has been called into existence on this continent which has lately assumed very formidable dimensions—I mean the Fenian Brotherhood. A part of the avowed policy of this organization is the severance of the connection between these Colonies and Great Britain. The termination of the civil war in the United States has thrown loose on that country nearly half a million of daring and reckless men, with a taste for the license and excitement of military life, and a disrelish of the pursuits of peace. These men, from whom the Fenian terrorists are chiefly drawn, are ready to embark in the most lawless and hazardous enterprises. The organization extends throughout the Northern and Western States, and boasts of having at its command any number of men and any amount of money for operations against the British Empire, which it seeks to dismember. It is not concealed that the vulnerable point through which this object is to be attained is British America. Now, sir, perhaps this House will be astonished to learn that in the published platform of the Fenian organization, it is laid down as a leading object and duty of that body to prevent the consolidation of British power on this continent by the proposed union of these Provinces under one government. This fact has only come to my knowledge within a few weeks. I repeat, sir, it is laid down in the platform of the Fenian body as the paramount duty of every Fenian either in the United States or the British Provinces to oppose and frustrate any union among us. Therefore, I say that the man who now opposes union—I do not mean the Quebec scheme—but who sets his face against all union actually endorses the leading principle of Fenianism. I do not believe there are a dozen men in Nova Scotia who would knowingly occupy this position, and I feel confident that when this fact is understood it will do much to popularize the Union sentiment in this Province, whose loyalty is proverbial. If there is a single argument that will more than another reach the hearts of our loyal population, it is that the enemies of British power everywhere are hostile to this movement, and the fact should cause many of us to hesitate and enquire what is our true position? If we have any regard for our present happy condition, or any desire to continue our connection with Great Britain, it behooves us to set our house in order, and to see that we are not, in more ways than one, in the words of the New York Herald "gravitating towards annexation."

No one can doubt the patriotism of the people of Nova Scotia and if a hostile raid were made upon any portion of our coast, the invaders would meet with a reception they would not soon forget. But who does not know that the favor and protection of Great Britain would be to us a source of greater security than maintaining a standing army of 100,000 men? With the power of the greatest Empire under the sun at our backs we could present a fearless front to all the world. If it were desirable for no other cause than these Provinces should be consolidated—that that we would thereby disappoint the enemies of our country, it should be a strong inducement to union. But when in addition to this fact by that step we would secure the protection of the mother country, who would gainsay from us an act of just filial obedience to induce her to stretch forth her powerful arm to guard our property and rights—this ought certainly to be sufficient. I say, therefore, in view of these facts, in view of the dangers which have developed themselves within the last few months, if we can obtain an equitable union it is the duty of every man who desires to uphold British connexion—who is opposed to annexation—who has no sympathy with Fenians, and who does not wish to be consigned to the tender mercies of the lawless gang, to promote such an union of these provinces.

Now, sir, heading the opinions I do in reference to this great question—advocating the principle of Union and opposing the Quebec Resolutions, I have been asked by the press of this country, and I admit, not unfairly asked, to define my position. I have been asked to justify my conduct in opposing a scheme embodying a principle to which I am committed, without offering any other means of attaining the end I profess to have in view. Walk, sir, I may have to-day to define my position, and to answer the other objections urged against me. I am also here to make an important enquiry of the Government. As to my position, I am in favor of an Union—a Federal Union of these Provinces. I believe such a Union best suited to the exigencies of our situation. If a Legislative Union were practicable, I would prefer adopting the Federal principle in forming an union of British America. Among the admirable speeches delivered some years ago in this House on this subject, that of the present Chief Justice, in which that able lawyer and great politician "states that a Federal Union was best suited to our circumstances" appeared to me the most satisfactory and sound. Accepting, then, as I do, the principle of a Federal Union, I desire to ask the Government if there is no common ground on which the supporters of the Quebec scheme—abandoning that scheme—can meet the friends of an Union on more advantageous terms, and arrange the details of a measure that will be just and satisfactory to the people? I think there is a common ground—a ground on which I am willing to take my stand regardless of who follows me. If the Government will publicly abandon the Quebec scheme, and introduce a resolution in favor of a Federal Union of British America, leaving the details of the measure to the arbitration of the Imperial Government, properly advised by delegates from all the Provinces, I promise them my cordial support. This would be commencing rightly. By getting the endorsement of the Legislature, in the outset, of the principle of Union, and its authority to enter on the settlement of the details of a scheme, the friends of the measure would occupy a very different position

to that desired. The British Government have no especial partiality for the Quebec scheme; they desire an equitable union of British America, and instead of opposing, I have always advocated such an union.

There are one or two other matters to which I shall allude before turning my attention to the question I intend to ask. A few days ago this House went through all the solemn forms of a Conference with the other branch of the Legislature on a subject, the importance of which is admitted by every one—I allude to the protection of our fisheries. What was the result of the deliberations of the joint committee of both Houses on that occasion? What means did they suggest for that great service? Their report has been placed on our table, and what does it advise? An humble petition to the Queen's Government, praying for assistance. In our necessities we rush to the Colonial Office for aid and protection, and yet there are those among us who deny any reciprocal duty on our part—any obligation even to listen respectfully to the wishes of British Ministers. We know that although we may buy a blockade runner, and vote a few thousand dollars for the service, our Fisheries can have no adequate protection if England refuses us her aid. Now, I ask, is it reasonable to expect a favorable answer to our petition if we refuse to comply, at such an important period in our history, with the request of Her Majesty's Government? Another subject to which I must refer, because its bearing on the question of Colonial Union is so palpable to escape the commonest observation. Every one will admit that the clouds impending over our political horizon at the present time may justly excite the most serious apprehensions. An organization at first regarded with contempt, has been called into existence on this continent which has lately assumed very formidable dimensions—I mean the Fenian Brotherhood. A part of the avowed policy of this organization is the severance of the connection between these Colonies and Great Britain. The termination of the civil war in the United States has thrown loose on that country nearly half a million of daring and reckless men, with a taste for the license and excitement of military life, and a disrelish of the pursuits of peace. These men, from whom the Fenian terrorists are chiefly drawn, are ready to embark in the most lawless and hazardous enterprises. The organization extends throughout the Northern and Western States, and boasts of having at its command any number of men and any amount of money for operations against the British Empire, which it seeks to dismember. It is not concealed that the vulnerable point through which this object is to be attained is British America. Now, sir, perhaps this House will be astonished to learn that in the published platform of the Fenian organization, it is laid down as a leading object and duty of that body to prevent the consolidation of British power on this continent by the proposed union of these Provinces under one government. This fact has only come to my knowledge within a few weeks. I repeat, sir, it is laid down in the platform of the Fenian body as the paramount duty of every Fenian either in the United States or the British Provinces to oppose and frustrate any union among us. Therefore, I say that the man who now opposes union—I do not mean the Quebec scheme—but who sets his face against all union actually endorses the leading principle of Fenianism. I do not believe there are a dozen men in Nova Scotia who would knowingly occupy this position, and I feel confident that when this fact is understood it will do much to popularize the Union sentiment in this Province, whose loyalty is proverbial. If there is a single argument that will more than another reach the hearts of our loyal population, it is that the enemies of British power everywhere are hostile to this movement, and the fact should cause many of us to hesitate and enquire what is our true position? If we have any regard for our present happy condition, or any desire to continue our connection with Great Britain, it behooves us to set our house in order, and to see that we are not, in more ways than one, in the words of the New York Herald "gravitating towards annexation."

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Now, sir, heading the opinions I do in reference to this great question—advocating the principle of Union and opposing the Quebec Resolutions, I have been asked by the press of this country, and I admit, not unfairly asked, to define my position. I have been asked to justify my conduct in opposing a scheme embodying a principle to which I am committed, without offering any other means of attaining the end I profess to have in view. Walk, sir, I may have to-day to define my position, and to answer the other objections urged against me. I am also here to make an important enquiry of the Government. As to my position, I am in favor of an Union—a Federal Union of these Provinces. I believe such a Union best suited to the exigencies of our situation. If a Legislative Union were practicable, I would prefer adopting the Federal principle in forming an union of British America. Among the admirable speeches delivered some years ago in this House on this subject, that of the present Chief Justice, in which that able lawyer and great politician "states that a Federal Union was best suited to our circumstances" appeared to me the most satisfactory and sound. Accepting, then, as I do, the principle of a Federal Union, I desire to ask the Government if there is no common ground on which the supporters of the Quebec scheme—abandoning that scheme—can meet the friends of an Union on more advantageous terms, and arrange the details of a measure that will be just and satisfactory to the people? I think there is a common ground—a ground on which I am willing to take my stand regardless of who follows me. If the Government will publicly abandon the Quebec scheme, and introduce a resolution in favor of a Federal Union of British America, leaving the details of the measure to the arbitration of the Imperial Government, properly advised by delegates from all the Provinces, I promise them my cordial support. This would be commencing rightly. By getting the endorsement of the Legislature, in the outset, of the principle of Union, and its authority to enter on the settlement of the details of a scheme, the friends of the measure would occupy a very different position

to that desired. The British Government have no especial partiality for the Quebec scheme; they desire an equitable union of British America, and instead of opposing, I have always advocated such an union.

There are one or two other matters to which I shall allude before turning my attention to the question I intend to ask. A few days ago this House went through all the solemn forms of a Conference with the other branch of the Legislature on a subject, the importance of which is admitted by every one—I allude to the protection of our fisheries. What was the result of the deliberations of the joint committee of both Houses on that occasion? What means did they suggest for that great service? Their report has been placed on our table, and what does it advise? An humble petition to the Queen's Government, praying for assistance. In our necessities we rush to the Colonial Office for aid and protection, and yet there are those among us who deny any reciprocal duty on our part—any obligation even to listen respectfully to the wishes of British Ministers. We know that although we may buy a blockade runner, and vote a few thousand dollars for the service, our Fisheries can have no adequate protection if England refuses us her aid. Now, I ask, is it reasonable to expect a favorable answer to our petition if we refuse to comply, at such an important period in our history, with the request of Her Majesty's Government? Another subject to which I must refer, because its bearing on the question of Colonial Union is so palpable to escape the commonest observation. Every one will admit that the clouds impending over our political horizon at the present time may justly excite the most serious apprehensions. An organization at first regarded with contempt, has been called into existence on this continent which has lately assumed very formidable dimensions—I mean the Fenian Brotherhood. A part of the avowed policy of this organization is the severance of the connection between these Colonies and Great Britain. The termination of the civil war in the United States has thrown loose on that country nearly half a million of daring and reckless men, with a taste for the license and excitement of military life, and a disrelish of the pursuits of peace. These men, from whom the Fenian terrorists are chiefly drawn, are ready to embark in the most lawless and hazardous enterprises. The organization extends throughout the Northern and Western States, and boasts of having at its command any number of men and any amount of money for operations against the British Empire, which it seeks to dismember. It is not concealed that the vulnerable point through which this object is to be attained is British America. Now, sir, perhaps this House will be astonished to learn that in the published platform of the Fenian organization, it is laid down as a leading object and duty of that body to prevent the consolidation of British power on this continent by the proposed union of these Provinces under one government. This fact has only come to my knowledge within a few weeks. I repeat, sir, it is laid down in the platform of the Fenian body as the paramount duty of every Fenian either in the United States or the British Provinces to oppose and frustrate any union among us. Therefore, I say that the man who now opposes union—I do not mean the Quebec scheme—but who sets his face against all union actually endorses the leading principle of Fenianism. I do not believe there are a dozen men in Nova Scotia who would knowingly occupy this position, and I feel confident that when this fact is understood it will do much to popularize the Union sentiment in this Province, whose loyalty is proverbial. If there is a single argument that will more than another reach the hearts of our loyal population, it is that the enemies of British power everywhere are hostile to this movement, and the fact should cause many of us to hesitate and enquire what is our true position? If we have any regard for our present happy condition, or any desire to continue our connection with Great Britain, it behooves us to set our house in order, and to see that we are not, in more ways than one, in the words of the New York Herald "gravitating towards annexation."

No one can doubt the patriotism of the people of Nova Scotia and if a hostile raid were made upon any portion of our coast, the invaders would meet with a reception they would not soon forget. But who does not know that the favor and protection of Great Britain would be to us a source of greater security than maintaining a standing army of 100,000 men? With the power of the greatest Empire under the sun at our backs we could present a fearless front to all the world. If it were desirable for no other cause than these Provinces should be consolidated—that that we would thereby disappoint the enemies of our country, it should be a strong inducement to union. But when in addition to this fact by that step we would secure the protection of the mother country, who would gainsay from us an act of just filial obedience to induce her to stretch forth her powerful arm to guard our property and rights—this ought certainly to be sufficient. I say, therefore, in view of these facts, in view of the dangers which have developed themselves within the last few months, if we can obtain an equitable union it is the duty of every man who desires to uphold British connexion—who is opposed to annexation—who has no sympathy with Fenians, and who does not wish to be consigned to the tender mercies of the lawless gang, to promote such an union of these provinces.

Now, sir, heading the opinions I do in reference to this great question—advocating the principle of Union and opposing the Quebec Resolutions, I have been asked by the press of this country, and I admit, not unfairly asked, to define my position. I have been asked to justify my conduct in opposing a scheme embodying a principle to which I am committed, without offering any other means of attaining the end I profess to have in view. Walk, sir, I may have to-day to define my position, and to answer the other objections urged against me. I am also here to make an important enquiry of the Government. As to my position, I am in favor of an Union—a Federal Union of these Provinces. I believe such a Union best suited to the exigencies of our situation. If a Legislative Union were practicable, I would prefer adopting the Federal principle in forming an union of British America. Among the admirable speeches delivered some years ago in this House on this subject, that of the present Chief Justice, in which that able lawyer and great politician "states that a Federal Union was best suited to our circumstances" appeared to me the most satisfactory and sound. Accepting, then, as I do, the principle of a Federal Union, I desire to ask the Government if there is no common ground on which the supporters of the Quebec scheme—abandoning that scheme—can meet the friends of an Union on more advantageous terms, and arrange the details of a measure that will be just and satisfactory to the people? I think there is a common ground—a ground on which I am willing to take my stand regardless of who follows me. If the Government will publicly abandon the Quebec scheme, and introduce a resolution in favor of a Federal Union of British America, leaving the details of the measure to the arbitration of the Imperial Government, properly advised by delegates from all the Provinces, I promise them my cordial support. This would be commencing rightly. By getting the endorsement of the Legislature, in the outset, of the principle of Union, and its authority to enter on the settlement of the details of a scheme, the friends of the measure would occupy a very different position