

from that occupied by the delegates to the Quebec Conference, who went to Canada, in 1864, without any authority from Parliament. No small amount of opposition was at that time excited against confederation from this cause. It had much weight with myself and many others, who looked upon the action of the delegates as an improper usurpation of power. Another conference on this side of the water, has been suggested in certain quarters, but if we really desire a practical result, it cannot be entertained. To reopen negotiations here at the present time would be only to retard Union for some years to come. Besides I believe the most certain means of obtaining justice for the Maritime Provinces, would be to leave the settlement of details to the Imperial Government. I ask is there a tribunal in the world to which Nova Scotia might more confidently appeal for justice than to that august and impartial body? Its integrity, its wisdom—its intelligence are beyond dispute. I say that if there be a tribunal, where might will not prevail against right, it is the one I indicate. If we can get justice any where, we will get it from that tribunal, and I ask does any Nova Scotian desire more than justice? This subject has engaged the attention of the public men of Great Britain. It is well known in that country that the difficulties in the way of union are principally with the Maritime Provinces, and if we throw ourselves confidently on the justice of the British Government, I believe we will receive even a partial arbitration of our rights. I know of no means by which we can more effectually conclude the additions and secure the favorable consideration of the Queen's Government than by thus proving our confidence in its justice, and our anxiety to meet its wishes. I therefore ask the leader of the Government, and through him the advocates of the Quebec scheme, whether they are so wedded to that scheme, as to be unable to entertain the proposition I, as a friend of Colonial Union, now frankly make? I will not deny that the extraordinary reaction that has taken place in Nova Brunswick in regard to Union, and the admitted partiality of a large majority of the people of Nova Scotia for the abstract principle, coupled with the firm but constitutional pressure of the Imperial authorities, afford grounds to apprehend that before very long even the Quebec Resolutions may be carried in the Maritime Provinces. The object of my present government is—and I fearlessly avow it—to defeat the Quebec scheme. Before it is too late—before we are borne down by the powerful influences against which we are now contending—while yet we have a formidable army in the field—while our opponents respect our strength and hesitate at an engagement—is it not wise to seek the most advantageous terms of compromise? Men of extreme views—men who desire to make this great subject a stalking horse on which to ride into office—in short, individuals with other ends to serve, may condemn the course I have taken, but no one values the course or approval of such men. I shall lose nothing in severing my connection with them, while I feel my conduct will be generally sustained by the intelligent portion of my countrymen. But I do confess that this step may cover me politically and personally from a few gentlemen, sincere in their opposition to all union—whom I respect, and whose friendship I value. I shall regret it, but must frankly say, I desire to maintain no connection, I am prepared to throw away any friendship, that can only be preserved at the sacrifice of my convictions. If I have been marked for anything while I have been in this Assembly, it has been for independence of action, and fearlessness in the expression of my thoughts. I have never acknowledged allegiance to any leader or party in this House. I have never attended a party caucus in my life. Among the gentlemen I address, no one within the past two years has come more frequently into keen collision here and elsewhere with the occupants of the Treasury Benches than myself. I am certainly indebted to these gentlemen for no favours, and I can point to more than a score of personal and political injuries received at their hands. But, Sir, I would be unworthy of my position in this Legislature, if I could allow considerations of this nature on one side or the other to control my action in the presence of a question of the highest magnitude. I will not deny that I have some ambition as a public man, but my highest ambition will be satisfied, if I can contribute a humble stone to the edifice of Colonial Union. Before, however, I can yield any assistance to the builders, the model of the proposed structure must be altered, and the whole design undergo the revision of an architect in whom I have confidence.

Sir, the hostility I have all along evinced to the Quebec scheme of Confederation has frequently been attributed to a desire to defeat the government, and thus promote my own political prospects. I trust that the course I have this day taken will be a sufficient answer to this charge. If such were my desire, my end would be most certainly attained, in the present wide-spread hostility to that scheme, by maintaining the position I have occupied for the last eighteen months, without committing myself to any proposal for the solution of our difficulties. But as an avowed Unionist, such a course would be indefensible, and I am not willing to pursue any course I cannot defend. Nor do I seek any temporary triumph over my political opponents at the expense of the highest interests of my country. If the government are animated by sentiments of moderation, justice and sound policy, they shall have my humble aid in the great work in which they are engaged. I hope we may find a common ground of co-operation in our efforts to improve our present position of isolation and obscurity, and elevate Nova Scotia to the position nature intended her to occupy. But, Sir, do not let me be supposed to underrate the present position of this Province. Far from it. Even as she is, I am proud of my country, and grateful for the happy home she affords her sons. Yet, proud, Sir, as I am of the little sea-girt province I call my native land; proud as I am of her free institutions—her moral status—her material wealth; proud as I am of the name of Nova Scotia—a name which the genius and valour of my countrymen have inscribed high on the scroll of fame; proud, I say as I am, and may well be permitted to be of these things, I have never ceased to entertain the hope, expressed in this Legislature in 1864, that the day was not far distant, when you, Sir, and I, and those who listen to me—in common with the inhabitants of these noble Provinces, united under one government, might stand before the world in the prouder national character of British Americans.

HON. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY replied.—I have listened with much gratification to the address which has just been delivered to this House by the hon. member for Richmond, and I confess that I am not surprised that, distasteful as the Quebec scheme of Union has been to many persons in this country, in the existing condition of public affairs in British North America, the attention of the strongest opponents of that scheme should be directed to the great question of what solution may be found for the difficulties of the position in which we are placed. Having taken a part in maturing that great measure—having, on former occasions, felt it my duty to vindicate the scheme that was propounded for the consideration of British North America, I cannot be supposed to enter into the feelings of the hon. member for Richmond in his denunciation of that scheme. I believed then, and I believe now, that the plan of Intercolonial Union that was propounded by the Conference at Quebec, and which has obtained so marked a degree of favour and approval from Her Majesty's Government, did afford the people of British North America the most ample guarantee for the rights and privileges of all sections. But I am not insensible to the fact that many objections have been raised against that scheme, and that many gentlemen who have taken a most prominent part in opposing various features of the measure, have in the Press, as the hon. member has in his place in Parliament, declared themselves in favour of a Union of British North America, that would be acceptable to the people of this country. I do not stand in peculiar position I do, able, however, to give a direct and unequivocal statement of the views of the government or of the promoters of the Quebec scheme. The House is well aware that this question has from the first been submitted to the people as one in which the government divided the responsibility with gentlemen who were politically opposed to them. Occupying this position the government would have been not only unjust to the gentleman who had supported them, but would have failed in their duty in respect to a great public question,

if they had been in a party aspect.—In dealing with this question the government have always consulted the wishes and inclinations, and carried with them, the co-operation of the gentlemen who are politically opposed to them. Under these circumstances it would be impossible for me to state the views of the government, except on consultation with those who have acted with us, and are parties to the scheme of Union. But as far as I may state without consultation, I believe that all the gentlemen who have been engaged in maturing the Quebec scheme have had no other desire than to meet the wishes and consult the best interests of their countrymen. They have always looked upon this question as too solemn in its character, to allow it for a single moment to be influenced by any considerations except the welfare of the country. I am not at all surprised at the statements made by the hon. member.—The last twelve months have been pregnant with circumstances that must give an importance and an urgency to this question of Colonial Union such as it has never obtained before. In view of the altered condition of things I am not at all surprised that the most strenuous opponents of the Quebec scheme are ready to co-operate on some common ground on which they and the promoters of that scheme will be prepared, at any sacrifice that they can make consistently with the great objects to be obtained, to deal with this question with the gravity that its importance demands, and arrive at a consummation that will be acceptable to the great body of the people.

MR. ANNAND.—After the very remarkable address delivered by the hon. member for Richmond, I think it right at once to declare openly that the question asked by the hon. gentleman has taken this side of the House by surprise. When he comes to us and propounds a delegation to the Colonial office—invites the interposition of the Colonial Government to settle a question involving the rights and liberties of this people—asks the Home Government to arrange the question without reference to the people. I look at this hon. member with surprise, and recall the sentiments that he uttered on former occasions. I feel strongly on this subject. It is an attempt to barter away, to sell the rights and liberties of the people. I do not know the influences that are at work, but I can imagine them. I never expected to live to see the time when, on the floors of this Parliament, a gentleman could arise and ask that our condition should be decided—where? not in your own Parliament, but by gentlemen sent across the water with carte blanche to settle the whole matter. The hon. member says he is in favor of the abstract principle of Union. I may or may not be in favor of it, but I cannot be a party to send the question for final decision to the Colonial office. We know that the Canadian element is predominant there, and these Maritime Provinces, however largely represented, would have little influence. The scheme that would come back would be substantially that of Quebec. I could have understood the hon. member had he proposed—and the proposal may be in harmony with my own view—a Convention of all the Provinces, called with the sanction of all the Crown in British North America. Such a Convention would consider the whole question, and come to an agreement, which could then be submitted to the people. If he had proposed some such scheme as that, I could have understood the hon. member; but to take the whole question from this House is what can never be agreed to by this people. I do not misinterpret the feeling of this country when I say that there is a universal feeling against any union with Canada. I do not say that this feeling is wise, there may be a good deal of prejudice mixed up with it; but to follow the course proposed would be to destroy all hopes of unity. I am surprised at the motion of the hon. member, but I apprehend the result. The Government are only too glad to see a way of getting out of their present difficulties. However, I know, if there is a lack of patriotism and intelligence in this House, it is not the case elsewhere. Feeling that I do not hesitate to say this: A Union of these Provinces, consummated in this way, contrary to the wishes of the people, will not be worth the paper upon which it is recorded.

MR. MACDONNELL said.—I would not, Mr. Speaker, undertake the task of addressing the House upon this occasion and without more preparation upon so important a subject, were it not for the sentiments which have just fallen from the Hon. Prov. Secretary. Neither do I do so without a full conviction of the responsibility I assume in the course I intend to pursue. I felt happy, Sir, to observe the position taken by the hon. leader of the Government, and I trust that this position will be approved of and endorsed by his hon. colleagues, and by those associated with him at the Quebec conference. The hon. gentleman has at length shown a disposition to abandon that pet scheme of Union, which, for such a length of time he and his friends appeared determined to fasten upon the people,—a scheme, in my opinion, as obnoxious and distasteful to the country, as it would prove injurious to its best interests. I rejoice to find the spirit in which the enquiry of the hon. member for Richmond has been met, and I feel I would be wanting in the performance of duty, if I did not avail myself of this, the first opportunity of expressing my satisfaction.

The question before us, I need not say, is one which demands mature and deliberate consideration, and should not be determined in a day; but it is now before this house for the second time, and since it was first brought under our consideration it has engaged the attention of our press, wherein it has been canvassed in all its features. It has been debated at length in this Legislature and on the public platform. And it has brought our ablest and leading minds into desirable contact in its discussion. Taking the results of its agitation in these different arenas together, with a glance at the events which have transpired within the last year, and which are daily being enacted under our view, there is but one conclusion that can be arrived at by every honest man,—by the admirer of British institutions, and that is, that Union is most wise. This is a fact which is admitted almost on every hand,—by the opponents of the Quebec scheme as well as its supporters. I was indeed surprised when I saw the course taken by the hon. member for East Halifax, who has just set down. When I saw that hon. gentleman rise to address the house, I expected it was to approve of the proposition made by the hon. member for Richmond, and which was so satisfactorily met by the leader of the Government.

How could I expect differently, when I read the paper which I hold in my hand? Can that hon. gentleman pretend to deceive this House as to his own opinion on the subject? How dare he say that he will not inform the House whether he is for Union in the abstract or not? He must first deny his connection with one of the leading organs of opposition to the Quebec scheme, before he can seek this house to entertain a doubt as to his real position. Let me read an extract from the editorial column of

The Morning Chronicle of the 24th of January, last, of which the gentleman is Editor:—"And what then? Are we indifferent to the future of British America? Have we arrived at the conclusion that nothing should be done?—that we can remain forever in our present condition? On the contrary, while we claim that these Colonies—at all events the Maritime Provinces—never can be bettered by any change in their political situation, we feel that they cannot, in the very nature of things, always continue as they are. They may, it is true, go on for years and enjoy their present prosperity, but all the time must come when they will be required to enter into new relations with the mother country and the mother country will largely depend upon the exercise of great tact, wisdom, and forethought on the part both of British and Colonial statesmen."

"But it is because we feel that we must sooner or later make our choice between the mother country and the United States, that we desire to see this question of Colonial Union, now that it is fresh in the minds of the people, set at rest."

This journal then, Sir, the leading one of this Province in opposition to the Quebec scheme—the organ of the hon. leader of anti-Confederation in this country—is, as you see, not only a strong advocate of union, but urges that the question be immediately, while fresh on the minds of the people, set at rest, and recommends the means for doing so. If, then, these are the sentiments and opinions of the great leader of anti-Confederation, are we not to assume, that his followers entertain the same opinion, but like their leader, have an object, yes, too apparent an object in offering a factious opposition. The union of these Provinces is desired because it is a necessity. Considering the present happy, peaceful and prosperous state of this Province, I should feel happy indeed did this necessity not exist; but while circumstances do exist which to every sensible man leaves no room to deny this necessity, we in the position of the representatives of the people, holding the destiny of our common country in our hands, are bound by the highest duty we owe to the people of this Province to set this question at rest immediately, to use the words of the great leader of the anti-Confederate party. These circumstances are well known to every gentleman in this House, and many of them have been eloquently despatched upon by the hon. member for Richmond to require that I should refer to them at length.

Whatever my opinions on this great subject were a year ago, occurrences transpiring in the interim, and events which mark the present as a time for action rather than words, be our duty, leave no room for doubts in my mind as to what this House owes to the country.—The repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty is no longer a matter of doubt, as it was when I last sat here. The cause of its repeal is ominous of a state of things and of a feeling which should make us active for Union. It was not for advantage to themselves, because there was none, that the United States determined this treaty; but, as is well known, to avenge the hostility that the great majority of the people of that country entertain toward us as British subjects, and to injure and embarrass us in the channels of our trade. The position of these Provinces could not but be regarded as humiliating, when obliged to send delegates, in detached parties to Washington, to beseech the continuance of that treaty. Severe, we are obliged to apply to foreign and hostile countries for leave to trade and interchange articles of commerce with them, while left united as proposed we could cultivate and have within ourselves all these resources. Since we last met here, the British Government have declared and given most unequivocally to us their policy and advice on this subject. In the despatch from the Colonial Secretary of the 24th June last, we find the following expression of that policy:—"You will at the same time express the strong and deliberate opinion of Her Majesty's Government that it is an object much to be desired that all the British North American Colonies should agree to unite in one Government in the territorial extent of Canada, and in the maritime and commercial enterprise of the Lower Provinces, Her Majesty's Government see the elements of power, which only require to be combined in order to secure for these Provinces, which shall possess them all, a place among the most considerable communities of the world. In the spirit of loyalty to the British Crown, of attachment to British institutions, and of love for British institutions, by which all these Provinces are united, Her Majesty's Government recognize the bond by which all may be combined under one Government. Such an union seems to Her Majesty's Government to command itself to the Provinces on many grounds of moral and material advantage,—as giving a prospect of improved administration and increased prosperity."

Again in a despatch from Mr. Cardwell of 26th Sep., 1858, relating to the appointment of our present Lieutenant Governor, and in the appointment of this distinguished officer we observe in the choice made, which affords all Nova Scotians connected with that appointment just pride, and in other circumstances the desire of the Home Government for this Union, spoken in a most significant manner. In this despatch I find the following:—"But as he (Sir F. MacDonnell) has been appointed to Hong Kong, especially on the ground that the declaration of Her Majesty's Government will, if successful, lead to the abolition of the office of Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, it would be evidently inconsistent with that policy to appoint in his place another Lieutenant Governor in the ordinary way."

Here we have the policy of the British Government plainly declared. There may be gentlemen in this House, desirous of frustrating that policy, but I will not be found among them. I consider it our bounden duty to acquiesce in the wishes of those to whom we look for protection; who, during the past year, has expended in our defence an amount not exceeded by our entire revenue. The Quebec scheme being to a certain extent abandoned, the only question remaining is, to what tribunal can we appeal for a settlement of the terms of Union? I think that the proposal made by the hon. member for Richmond to refer the question to the arbitration of the Colonial office or of some other tribunal in the mother country would afford us a guarantee of our rights, and this proposition emanating from us must entitle us to peculiar consideration by any such tribunal. I did not rise to address the house at any length, but I desired to take the first opportunity of expressing these views.

I trust gentlemen will not hesitate to admit if they experience a change of opinion, on this great question. Besides the events which have occurred within the last twelve months, the question being of itself of such magnitude, and contemplating changes so great in our situation and constitution, is one which would naturally be looked upon with caution at first, and it is not inconsistent that these gentlemen should, after the examination of it, be found to alter their views on this subject. In this connection, I may read the following from Mr. Cardwell's despatch, already referred to:—"I am aware that this point, so novel as well as so important, has not been at once accepted in Nova Scotia, and that the Hon. Sec. has been asked to consider by the Legislature of Canada, and that Her Majesty's Government trust, that after a full and careful examination of the subject in all its bearings, the Maritime Provinces will perceive the great advantages which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the proposed union is calculated to confer upon them."

I feel it to my duty to support a proposition for such a union of these Provinces as will be found to be based on principles of equity and justice. I care not how much my personal position may suffer in taking this stand, this is the duty I owe to the country; and every member who regards the events which are transpiring among us should seize the opportunity offered if the proposition made be accepted.

MR. S. CAMPBELL.—If a gentleman, speaking with his brother before him, feels inadequate to the occasion, I, coming here unprepared for the debate, must have some excuse for the ordinariness of my observations. This question is one of the deepest moment to the people of this country and to this Legislature, and I would not be worthy of a seat within these walls if I were not prepared on the instant to express my sentiments upon a matter so pregnant with weal or woe to the province. I listened with interest and pleasure to the hon. member for Richmond, because I felt that he was sincere in his observations. I will not attribute any unworthy motives for the course which he has taken; but notwithstanding that I give him credit for candor and sincerity, I am not prepared to acquiesce in the result at which he has arrived until the people express themselves in a different tone and manner from those in which they have been expressing themselves for two or three years past. I do not believe that they desire a change in the constitution, or that they are willing to have their rights transferred to any quarter. We have had during the present session, petitions from every part of the province, praying that the house will not sanction a scheme of union without a reference to the people at the polls—that tribunal alone having the power to change our constitution, and the hon. member who has addressed the house himself, presented petitions to that effect within a few hours. Such petitions have come from any constituency, and will not be a traitor to their rights and feelings by consenting to such a change as is proposed. I consider that there is another difficulty in this case:—The Quebec scheme was entered into by several parties, they all concurred in its ratification, and must all be applied to in its abrogation. It is not in the power of the government to say yes or no to the demand which has been made—they may express their individual views but it is not in their power to cancel and destroy that scheme. I feel that no action should be taken on this question until the people have passed upon it, and until they will not go even with the proposition made by the hon. member for Richmond.

MR. MILLER.—The hon. member for Halifax in the course of his speech threw out some insinuations which I can safely regard with contempt. There is not a man in the House from whom I should be more willing to receive such insinuations. He says I am acting inconsistently in attempting now to pass a scheme of union without an appeal to the people—I omitted accidentally to refer to that subject in contrast of my remarks, when I explain my position in that respect my reasons will I think be satisfactory to the country, but it is not under the influence of such insinuations and taunts as have been thrown out by that hon. member that I will be induced to express my views—that is a matter of courtesy, and he has placed himself beyond the bounds of courtesy by the remarks which he has made.

MR. ANCHUTZ.—I trust we will not approach a question of so grave a character with any exhibition of temper, and while I am not surprised at the feelings of the gentleman who has just spoken, I deprecate such expressions upon this occasion. I will say in reference to some observations that have been made, that it is going too far to speak of the Quebec scheme being abandoned. I was not surprised when the Prov. Sec. rose and stated that he was not in a position to give an answer to the question because he can hardly be said to represent even Nova Scotia; for he was but one of those who represented this Province. It is not very agreeable to gentlemen interested in the Quebec scheme to hear the allusions that have been made; I am prepared to advocate that scheme as one referring upon these Provinces everything that they should ask. At the same time, however, one would be more pleased than I if further concessions could be obtained; but any such concession must be obtained at the expense of some other Province. I agree with the hon. member for Richmond that no new scheme would place us in a worse position. The reference with which the Prov. Sec. approached the question was due to the gentlemen in this country and beyond, who were consulted with the formation of the present scheme of union.

MR. TOWN.—I was greatly astonished on coming into the House to hear the hon. member for Richmond addressing the House on this subject. I would not do anything distasteful to the great body of the people; and until proper consultation is had, I think the discussion out of place.

MR. LOCKE.—We sometimes read of villages while in a state of apparent security, being overturned and overwhelmed by an avalanche. But the surprise of persons in that situation could not be greater than that of some gentlemen with whom I sit at what has occurred. It was astonishing to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Richmond, who though he always favored a union of some sort, was an uncompromising opponent of the Quebec scheme; but how much more so to hear the expressions of the hon. member for Inverness, Mr. McDonnell, who was an uncompromising opponent of any species of union.

The discussion then ceased.

THURSDAY, April 5, 1866.

UNION OF THE COLONIES.

MR. ANNAND said.—I felt, Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Inverness, Mr. McDonnell, addressed the House, that the time had come when I should define my position vis-a-vis the question of a Union of the Colonies, and I shall now invite the attention of the House to that position. I have always been in favor of a union of the Maritime Provinces, and my views upon that subject entirely accord with the views expressed by members of both sides. I need not now recur to the Convention held at Prince Edward Island, or to what took place elsewhere when the Convention was dissolved. These are matters of history, and I will merely allude to the objections which I entertain to any union of the Colonies. I have always thought that the people of Canada were dissimilar to us in origin and pursuits, and that the fact of this Province being separated from communication with the world, excepting through hostile territory, rendered it practically impossible that a union in the present state of affairs could take place. I have since entertained, and have here expressed the opinion, that all the benefits of which we have heard can be obtained without union. Let me hereby refer to three of them—in the first place, I maintain that all matters of material advantage relating to trade can be obtained without a political union. What is there to hinder us today from arranging a Treaty of Free Trade