

[FROM THE OFFICIAL REPORTS.]

House of Assembly.

THURSDAY, April 5, 1866.

UNION OF THE COLONIES.

Mr. Annand's Speech continued.

in the manufacture of the different Provinces? I may be told that Canada will not entertain the proposition now;—perhaps, having the objects she has at present in view, might refuse, but in 1862 she was pressing upon us such a mutual exchange. She felt then, and her leading manufacturers feel now, that they are the manufacturing people of British America. We are lower in the scale than New Brunswick, and it is therefore to the advantage of Canada to have free trade between the Provinces. As regards the currencies, I take it for granted that these could be arranged by the various Financial Secretaries in a week—I said in an afternoon last year. It is not necessary then for these purposes to have a political union. It is said again that we must have such a union before we can obtain the Intercolonial Railway, enabling us to have free and rapid communication with each other.—I deny it, and I point to the action of Canada in 1862, when she agreed with our delegates for its construction. Why it was not built it is not necessary to say, and I will not say, because I do not desire to create irritation between the governments of these colonies. That railway, thus bringing us into connection with Canada, however valuable it may be in time of war, as affording a passage for troops, I never regarded as of much importance in relation to trade, because while communication is open with Portland, there will be little or no traffic across the Intercolonial line. Though we may attach considerable importance to that line, yet I maintain it is not necessary to our existence. We live by the sea, and have free access to other countries,—but it involves the existence of Canada. She would have no access to the United States in time of war, and that railway would afford the only means of communication which she would have with the mother country. I therefore hold as I held in 1862 that however valuable the intercolonial railway may be to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it involves the existence of Canada. I say that no political union is necessary, unless Canadian statesmen, using it as a lever, say you shall have no railway unless you unite with us. Holding these opinions, I ask why is this union pressed? Two years ago our country was undisturbed and our people were quiet; now this Province is a scene of agitation from Cape Sable to Cape North. These difficulties did not arise with us, our people were contented and happy until Canada, embarrassed in her own condition pressed the proposals for union upon us, and I can point to speeches of Canadian statesmen which show that this was the cause of the agitation. There is another branch of the subject to which I will now refer,—the question of defence. It is said that if all the questions of trade, of postage, of the currency, and of the railway could be arranged, the great question of defence yet remains. There would have been some force in the argument a year ago, but what has transpired since then? We have seen these two Provinces threatened by a lawless set of men, who contemplated an attack upon us; and what was their programme of operations? If these Colonies were to be attacked at all, they were to be simultaneously attacked,—then a way goes the argument about Union as a means of Defence. Does it require a political union to arm the people of these Provinces? No, Sir, it is quite sufficient to show them a common danger and they rally with one will in a common defence as is being practically illustrated at this hour. Take another view of the question. I will assume that a union of the Colonies is desired, if not by us, by the mother country, and in speaking of the mother country I may say that all suggestions coming from that quarter I regard with the greatest respect, one reason for this is that we owe her much—we have contributed but little to our own support and defence, and that government throws its protection over us whenever it is required; therefore I say I yield great deference to the opinion of the Imperial Government but the question after all comes back to our own country and I ask who are the best judges of the institutions, under which they should live? The Home Government have given us institutions of which we are proud, and which we work out practically,—they have never shown a disposition to deprive us of these. It is not necessary that I should repeat my objections to the Quebec scheme, but I will say, whether owing to a break-down of the opposition to union, or owing to the opinions of the British Government, if a union should become desirable, and I should give up my own views, believing as I now do that such a union is undesirable, which is the best way to bring that union about? Assuming it to be desirable, and that it will not lead to independence of the mother country as I believe it will; assuming that the relations between the Provinces should be changed, I believe and hold that the railway should precede the union. Suppose, for instance, that difficulty arose from a Fenian raid, or for any other cause, and that a declaration of war being made, communication between the United States and Canada was severed,—suppose union consummated, and parliament convened to meet at Ottawa, how would we get there now? We should have to travel through the wilderness of New Brunswick, and I therefore maintain that the railway should precede the union. Suppose again that on a sudden outbreak of hostilities it became necessary to suspend the Habeas Corpus act, how would Parliament be assembled? The Government might assume the responsibility, but that responsibility is seldom assumed by any Government, and we saw a few weeks ago that Sir George Grey introduced a bill into the Imperial Parliament in reference to that subject. Then I maintain we should have free trade before the union,—we ought to know more of each other—at present the men of Canada West know more of the people of the United States than of us—that state of things should be reversed before going into the union, we should become familiar with each other and have large business intercourse, I believe that by a union with Canada the Maritime Provinces must suffer largely in treasure, in power, and in influence.—I think I may safely say that not one of these Provinces will have this scheme, it has been refused in Prince Edward Island and in Newfoundland, and they will have nothing to do with it now in New Brunswick, and need I say that at present nine-tenths of the people of Nova Scotia would reject it? Under these circumstances, and yielding deference to the views of the Imperial Government, and assuming a union to be desirable, I ask what is the best mode of bringing the union about? I reply, by aban-

doning the Quebec scheme in the first place. The action of our Government can be of no avail in this particular unless the Government of Canada express the same determination, because the gentlemen composing the delegation to Quebec are bound to carry that scheme if possible, and it will require the consent of all of them to abandon it. Supposing the scheme abandoned, there are three ways of approaching the question. One mode is to assemble the leading minds of the Provinces—and when I say the leading minds, I mean not merely the gentlemen representing the views of those who went to Quebec, but gentlemen who have taken a prominent part against the Quebec scheme, gentlemen opposing any union at all, with a view to the full consideration of the subject, just as that which any question requires. Public men from all the Provinces should then be assembled in such numbers that all cause of jealousy should be removed. Let me here say, to guard myself from mis-interpretation, that any scheme of union, after being thus considered, must come back to the Parliaments and to the people for ratification. I care not how perfect or how advantageous the scheme may be, unless the Parliaments and the people are consulted, it must fail to satisfy the country. Another mode would be to assemble Delegates, composed of the same elements, at the Colonial Office, when, in presence of Her Majesty's Ministers, the question could be discussed; but even in that case it must come back to be settled by our people. I utter here a third mode that recommends itself to me: there is a great diversity between the interests of Canada and those of the Maritime Provinces while the latter have many interests in common, I would therefore convene delegates from the four Maritime Provinces and see if they can agree on a platform for a union with Canada. I maintain that if the delegates were to assemble at the Colonial office, acting in detached parties, they would be cut into fragments, they would have no voice in common, and would be at the mercy of the Canadian influences by which they would be surrounded in London. Any policy, therefore, recommending itself to the people, must be matured as I think by the representatives of the Maritime Provinces. Then would come up this question: should not these four Provinces go in as one asking for equal representation with either of the Canadas and claiming it as their right and throwing overboard the unsound principle of representation by population, taking care also, that their revenues should be properly secured.—If the Maritime Provinces could thus be brought to agree upon a platform then let the debate be adjourned to the Colonial office, and our delegates being thus brought face to face with Canadian representatives, we might expect Her Majesty's Government to force Canada to accept such terms as reason would recommend. Even then the scheme must come back to us to be ratified, and do you think that the people, having confidence in the Maritime Convention and in the Imperial Government, would reject fair and reasonable proposals? I do not recognize the necessity for a union, but I believe that in deference to the wishes of the British Government a scheme so arranged would be accepted. That was what I meant when I wrote the article referred to the other day; but I meant more—I meant that our relations with the parent country should be strengthened. What is there in the Quebec scheme to prevent a separation? I may be mistaken, but I thought I could see in England, during my recent visit there, a desire to get rid of these Colonies, and an impression that by Confederation England would be relieved of a portion of the expense which we cause at present. I was sorry to see in high quarters a desire that these Colonies should be got rid of; and I apprehend seriously that Confederation, pure and simple, is only another name for independence. I wish to guard against that; my desire is that British America should remain British America. I wish to strengthen our relations with the parent state, and I believe that the only mode of accomplishing that is by having representation in the Imperial Parliament. With that connecting link we would always form a part of the Empire. What is it that makes California or Texas a part of the American Union? It is their representation in Congress and in the Senate. Take away that representation, and how long will they form a part of the Union? They are each large enough and far enough away to set up for themselves. The time may come when these Colonies will be required to come forward in defence of the mother country; and if I were an Englishman I would never consent to any step approaching independence. I saw a calculation the other day which showed that the coal fields of Great Britain, upon which her enormous prosperity to so great an extent depends, will be exhausted in about 112 years, but at the present rate of consumption that period would probably be reduced to fifty years, and America being in possession of the coal mines of Nova Scotia, of her fisheries, and of her maritime facilities, would become immediately the first maritime power in the world. Looking to her manufacturing interests alone, England should preserve the colonies, and if she would make them a part of the Empire, the great field of manufacture might be transferred from the old world to the new. Looking at the matter as an Englishman, I would say, suppose Confederation takes place and the Provinces become independent, their connection with the mother country is gone, and what if annexation should follow? Suppose America were to ally herself with Russia, and she has strong proclivities in that direction, even the safety of the British Islands would be imperilled. British statesmen should view the matter in the light of expediency, and instead of endeavoring to get rid of us on account of our expensiveness, they should draw us nearer to England, making us a part of the Empire, and giving us representation in her Parliament. Any scheme wanting that element will, I believe, be defective, and any scheme which does not improve our relations with the Mother country will certainly eventuate in independence. Suppose that by the repeal of the reciprocity treaty Canada should become impoverished and, as was said the other day, that she should come begging for annexation and that we were connected with her, what security would we have for our British connection, I repeat that I am opposed to any scheme of union that will not contain a provision for an improvement in the relations of the Empire.—Looking at it from an English point of view it will be seen that the Colonies having separated from the parent state the Empire will become, to use a common phrase, demoralized, and its extent will be confined to the limits of the British Islands. That is the view in which the question should be regarded by British Statesmen. By such a scheme as that which I have proposed the object of a settlement would be shown on those

who really oppose it. That is the mode in which I would approach the question of union,—I would be willing to advocate such a cause if the subject be pressed upon us, but I have yet to hear the first substantial argument in favour of Confederation. If the policy of union be pressed upon us by the Imperial Government let us labour to procure such a scheme as will be acceptable to the Colonies, — let it be a union of the hearts and wills of the people not one forced upon them. We were elected for a different purpose,—the questions before the people at the time when we were elected were violations of law and order, questions relating to retrenchment, to the suffrage, the question of turning out of office one set of gentlemen who had held power for four years. The question of a change in their constitution was therefore not before them.—It would be a rash thing on the part of this legislature to say that the men elected to carry out the "well understood wishes of the people" should ratify a scheme of union against the repeated protests which have been made. If we are to be united let us approach the question in a right spirit, and not in the tone of temper which was indulged in the other day. Looking at the great future of these Provinces let us consider, not only what would be best for us, but what will be best for our children coming after us.

REPLY OF HON. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

Dr. TUPPER said:—The hon. gentleman has raised a question of such deep importance and interest to the people of the Province that I feel it my duty, as a member of the Legislature, to take immediate notice of the observations which he has fallen from him. When an hon. gentleman undertakes, in the face of this Legislature, to take the public sentiment of this country on a question of deep import to the whole Province, it becomes necessary that he should place himself in a position to receive the confidence and respect of the members of the House, and the people they represent.—I think if there is a gentleman in this Legislature—I will go further and say if there is a gentleman in this country, who, by his own conduct, has forfeited all claim to the respect and confidence of this House in relation to a great question of public policy, it is the hon. member who has just sat down, and I shall feel it my duty to put briefly before this House and country the grounds upon which I assume the responsibility of making this assertion. The hon. member has just stated to the House that he has yet to hear the first argument in favor of Union between these Provinces of British North America. I ask this House what are they to think of a gentleman claiming the position, not of a leader of a party, but even of an honest and straight-forward representative of this legislature, who will dare to utter such a sentiment as that, when they know that here recorded in the public journals of the country is the declaration of that hon. member, as a statesman, as a member of Parliament, as a member of the Executive Council, asking the House to confirm the declaration which he had made, that so great and so many were the advantages of a Union of British North America, that the time had arrived when it was necessary to clothe the Government of the country with power to deal with the question? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ANNAND—No, no!

Dr. TUPPER—The hon. member may deny what he likes. It is not a question of affirmation or denial. The journals under my hand have only to be opened, and there upon the page stands the indelible record that no denial will wipe away, by which the hon. member committed himself to the policy of a Union of British North America.

Mr. ANNAND—Will the hon. gentleman turn to the journals?

Dr. TUPPER—I shall turn to them for the hon. gentleman's satisfaction as he seems to have a very short memory, and show him the resolution, and the action of the government in relation to it. He, as a member of the Cabinet, actually initiated the policy of a Union of British North America—he called not only the attention of the House to the subject, but asked the several governments of British North America to hold such a Convention as would ascertain the best mode of dealing with the question. What are we to think of gentlemen who, having come forward as a member of the government and affirmed such a principle as that, and obtained the support of the House to that principle, now attempts to insult the intelligence of the people of this country by telling them, years afterwards, that he has yet to hear the first argument in favour of a Union of British North America.—He has professed respect for the British Government—but he has trampled down the authority of the government under his feet. I ask him to read the despatches which have emanated from the Imperial Government, and, if they are entitled to such respect, do they not contain arguments enough in favour of a Union of British North America?

I have shown you in the outset that the hon. member has treated the Legislature as devoid of ordinary intelligence when he has undertaken to say that the action to which he invited the attention of this House on a former occasion was invited dishonestly by him. Are we or are we not to suppose that the views and sentiments which he placed before the Legislature then were entirely at variance with those he actually held? If the hon. member had told us that like a weathercock he shifted with every changing breeze—that he changed his views from hour to hour, then I could feel that though his views were unworthy of respect yet he had not attempted to insult the intelligence of the House. The hon. member has a policy for every day in the week—if he has not a public policy of his own he is the mouth-piece of every changing wind that blows. The hon. member has referred to a question which is at this moment engaging the attention not only of the Legislature, but of the best minds not only in this Province, but in the whole Empire, and that is, the defence of the country. He felt, in view of the prominence this question has now assumed, that it was necessary that he should show to the House how he proposed to deal with it. He says we would be exposed to simultaneous attack, and therefore Union would be of no avail, inasmuch as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada would have each to defend themselves. The Government of which he was a member, the delegates and representatives of that Government did not state that the Union of British North America would be of no avail for the security of Nova Scotia. As he is not bound by the public record of his views, given as a member of the Government, that the Intercolonial Railway, which would enable Canada at the hour of need to come to the rescue of this Province? Then the hon. member must show this House that he can hold these sentiments one day and change them the next, and at the same time ask the confidence

of any man that sits on these benches. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ANNAND: I referred to the Intercolonial Railway as a valuable measure of defence.

Dr. TUPPER: I would ask the hon. member when he comes here with his story of simultaneous attack, whether 250,000 souls in New Brunswick and 350,000 in Nova Scotia are as secure from the possibility of invasion as four millions of people sustained by the mightiest Empire in the world? Is not his story of simultaneous attack then swept away? But I will turn that hon. gentleman to his own recorded declaration in another place. The Morning Chronicle, which has long been the property of the hon. member, was edited for years by a gentleman in the other branch of the Legislature, and it is well known that a change was suddenly made in the editorial management of that paper. It was wrested from the hands of the gentleman in question, and the sole responsibility of editorship was assumed by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down. The hon. member felt that the question of defence lay at the very threshold. On the platform, in the press, and in the House he has proposed that the Legislatures of all British North America should pass laws by which they would supply the means to render defence practicable. He has proposed that laws should be passed under which the man on whom might rest the responsibility might draw the very last man from one Province for the defence of the other. Who is there that does not know that, having propounded that policy—giving the authority to draft our people to a power in another Province over whom we had no control—then, in the same paper, he held up, as a bugbear to frighten the people against Confederation, that they would under Confederation be dragged away from their homes for the defence of Canada. When I feel that the hon. member propounds statements that are so entirely antagonistic, I feel that it is right that I should expose him, and show the House and country how worthless are any views he may offer. I ask him, too, whether, feeling the deep importance of this question of defence, he did not propose the following mode in the pages of his journal, a year ago last January:—

"We would provide for the defence of the Empire by a general tax, equally levied by an Imperial statute all over the Empire. This might be either a tax on property, on polls, or on imports, to take precedence of all other taxes, and to be paid into the Imperial treasury. About £28,000,000 are annually required for naval and military expenditure. A property tax, if that were preferred, would raise the whole amount. But if it was thought better to collect the £28,000,000 upon imports, the commerce of the Empire would yield the whole without any portion of it feeling the burthen."

Is there a Novascotian that would not pay his portion of this tax cheerfully, and turn out, with arms in his hands, to defend the Empire besides? Is there one who will not cheerfully pay pound for pound with the Canadians, or with his fellow subjects in any other part of the Queen's dominions? Here is a scheme of National Defence, of which a statesman need not be ashamed, and our public men could not be much better employed than in pressing it on the notice of Her Majesty's Government.

The man who has made the bold proposition, that we should pay pound for pound with those who live in Manchester and London, whose representatives in Parliament control the expenditure of this money—this man who has proposed to levy this sum of money—that is to place a burthen upon our shoulders by an Imperial Statute, for the benefit of the Imperial Treasury—has, at the same time, in order to embarrass this great question, urged upon the people that they must reject Confederation, because they will have to pay a few cents of additional taxation. Am I not right, standing as I do on the threshold of the greatest constitutional changes,—on the threshold of a question, the rightful decision upon which, I believe, to decide our very existence as British subjects, to call your attention to these facts, and ask you whether the hon. member does not occupy the humiliating position of having propounded, from day to day, on every feature of this subject, views as antagonistic to each other as night is from day.

The hon. member asks how is Union to help our defence? I shall give him an authority which he may treat with contempt, but I doubt if there is any man in this Legislature beside himself that will endorse the statements that he has uttered to-day. The hon. member says he is prepared to yield the most respectful deference to the opinions of Her Majesty.—Where is his respect when he tramples down such a despatch as this and tells you that he, though the originator of this great question, has not, down to this hour, heard a single argument in favor of it. The Imperial Government said on the 24th day of June, 1865:—

"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 connexion, and of love for British institutions, by which all these Provinces are animated alike, 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 recommend itself to the Provinces on many grounds of moral and material advantages—as giving a well-founded prospect of improved administration and increased prosperity.

But there is one consideration which Her Majesty's Government feel it more especially their duty to press upon the Legislature of Nova Scotia. Looking to the determination which this country has ever exhibited to regard the defence of the colonies as a matter of Imperial concern, the Colonies must recognize a right and even acknowledge an obligation incumbent on the Home Government to urge with earnestness and just authority the measures which they consider most expedient on the part of the Colonists with a view to their own defence.

Nor can it be doubtful that the Provinces of British North America are incapable, when separate and divided from each other, of making those just and efficient preparations for national defence which would be easily undertaken by a Province uniting in itself all the population and all the resources of the whole."

I will admit for the sake of argument, that Her Majesty's Government—composed of the greatest military and political minds in the world—which have spent millions upon millions in our defence, are ignorant upon the subject. I will admit that the hon. member's opinion is worthy of more consideration than theirs; but there is not an intelligent man in Nova Scotia to-day that will not then admit that