

to accept it. How, then, was a contrary decision arrived at last year? It is surprising that a man of his sagacity and parliamentary experience did not see that when he referred that question to the people, he referred other questions sufficient to over-ride it. The question that went to the people was not simply whether they would have union with Canada, but first, whether they would have Mr. Tilley's Government, and second, whether they would accept the Quebec Scheme. I am not, therefore, surprised to hear member after member of the New Brunswick Assembly rising in his place to say, "I was not sent here to oppose all union, but to oppose the Quebec Scheme,"—and that a majority of that House is prepared to go for union. It is hardly fair to say that union was rejected by the people of New Brunswick. Mr. Tilley, by the course he adopted, offered a premium to all those who were opposed to his Government from whatever cause, to support those who objected to the Quebec scheme. Would not the same thing occur if there was an appeal to the people of this Province on the question? I ask the honorable gentleman (Hon. Mr. Whitman) if a dissolution took place in Nova Scotia to-morrow, whether Confederation would be the only question at the polls? Would it not be mixed up with School Bills, the assessment principle, retrenchment, opposition to Dr. Tupper's Government, &c.? Does it not after all come back to this?—What is Responsible Government? Is it not governing according to the well understood wishes of the people? And how are those wishes to be ascertained? Is it not through their representatives in the Legislature? I must appeal to the honorable gentleman himself as authority; as he claims to be a good sound Conservative, no doubt he will recognize the soundness of these well established principles.

But he says the convention at Charlotte has led to all these difficulties. I suppose he alludes to the difficulties referred to by the honorable seconder of the resolution, the main difficulty being that the effect of that Convention had been, as he (Hon. Mr. McCully) told us, if not exactly to destroy the Liberal party, at all events to keep the present Government in power. I leave that question to be dealt with by my honorable friend on my left (Hon. Sol. General), but I may say that I do not agree with him (Hon. Mr. McCully) historically. I think if any gentleman had wished to write the epitaph of the Conservative party in Nova Scotia at any time during the past 18 months, he might appropriately have inscribed on its tombstone "*Died from an over-dose of Federation.*" (Laughter.) But I leave the Solicitor General to speak on this point. I may say, however, that if Federation has done nothing more than this—destroyed party spirit—it has done much good. If I am told that I have myself been spoken of sometimes as a party man, I say that I am so much the better witness to prove what I have just said. Federation has brought us all down to our proper level, and I hope that henceforth we shall consider matters solely on their merits, as I ask the House to consider this.

If New Brunswick does not assent to Confederation, this resolution goes for nothing. We are asked either to accept or reject Union. It would be expressing my opinion too feebly, were I to content myself with saying that we have no alternative but to accept it,—I say that we ought to accept it. Looking at the events that are transpiring around us, looking at the expressed wish of the British Government, and seeing how that has operated in the neighboring Province, that it has brought even some of the most violent opponents of the Quebec scheme to assent to Confederation,—I think the time has passed for opposing it here, and that the best interests of Nova Scotia require that we also should assent to it.

I said at the outset that I did not wish to repeat myself, and I shall therefore only add that I have no doubt a majority of this House will be disposed to adopt this resolution, and to afford a mode of settling this question which may be confidently expected to result in lasting advantages to the people of this Province. With these observations I shall give my cordial support to the resolution.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—I have felt, and feel now, a good deal of hesitation in offering any observations on the question before the House, but after listening to the observations which have just fallen from the honorable and learned member, I could not help being struck with the entire want of heart and earnestness which he has

evinced in the whole matter, even in the remarkable statements which he at the same time made. He said that it was unnecessary to repeat arguments so often urged in favor of Union, and that he had nothing new to offer; but he did tell us, and repeated it over and over again, that it was the wish of the Imperial authorities that this union should take place. He also observed, in correcting the statements of the honorable member from Annapolis (Hon. Mr. Whitman) who, on Tuesday last, had remarked that the action of the Imperial Government had originated from the opinions of delegates from this side of the water, that Confederation came to us as the wish of the Imperial Government, unasked, unsolicited, by parties living in these Colonies. I was very much struck with the distinctness with which he (Hon. Mr. Dickey) repeated this assertion. Now, I ask, is that the case? I put the question to the honorable and learned gentleman himself,—and I may say, by the way, that it is rather unfortunate, for a free and fair discussion of this question that the four gentlemen of the learned profession should be on one side—the two members of Government, and the two other legal gentlemen having been delegates. The first notice that I have been able to discover of suggestions in regard to the question in despatches to the Colonial Secretary, is in the despatch of the Governor General communicating to the Colonial Secretary the result of the Conference at Quebec, in which he states that in his opinion a desire for a consolidation of British North America has taken strong hold of the minds of the most earnest and thoughtful men in these Provinces. This is the whole ground, and the only ground which induced the British Ministry to give expression to their desire in favor of Confederation. In this despatch of Lord Monck of October 1864, to which he annexes officially the scheme proposed by the delegates at Quebec, the closing paragraph reads as follows:—

"In transmitting these Resolutions for your consideration, I venture to state my opinion that a desire for a consolidation of British North America has taken strong hold of the minds of the most earnest and thoughtful men in these Provinces, and I trust, whether on the plan suggested by these Resolutions, or on some modification of it, a union may be effected which will satisfy the aspirations of so loyal and influential a portion of Her Majesty's subjects."

Now, to that Sir Edward Cardwell replies, and the answer which he gives is just such as Her Majesty's Ministers are in the habit of giving, where there are not very strong reasons for adopting a different course,—assent to anything that may be deemed useful to the Colonies, and not injurious to the interests of the Empire. There is the first time that a union of all the North American Colonies is referred to approvingly in a despatch from the Imperial Government.

Hon. Mr. Dickey.—No, no. There is a despatch of October, 1864.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—Yes, of October, 1864, but still in reply to this despatch of Lord Monck's.

Hon. Mr. Dickey.—The despatch to which I allude is dated the first day of October, 1864.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—It is an entire misrepresentation of the facts of the case to say that the British Government were influenced otherwise than by reports from this side of the water. They were misled by information communicated in the opinions of the delegates expressed to Lord Monck. While this is a reply to a great deal that has been said in favor of this union, I contend that the members of this House should remember that the despatches written by the Colonial Governors are merely their own suggestions at the instance of their Executive Councils. I ask whether the different Governments did not undertake to submit the whole Quebec Scheme, exactly as it was, to the different Legislatures? I ask the honorable and learned gentleman if that was not part of the arrangement when the Delegates separated at Quebec? Mr. Tilley, as I have always conceded, performed his duty in that particular. It is true that other questions may have had something to do with the result of the elections in New Brunswick, but it is a mistake to suppose that this question did not override all others, and induce the candidates to be either for or against union, or any scheme implied by it.

It is impossible to separate the consideration of the general question of union from that of the scheme settled by the delegates at Quebec. If the Legislature ventures to affirm, now, that union is necessary, there is little doubt but that it will

lead to the adoption, with very little modification, of the Quebec Scheme. We shall not have a Legislative union, but a Federal union with local Legislatures; and that is the leading feature of the Quebec Scheme.

The question for our consideration is whether it is right and proper for the representatives of the people of this country to pass on this question at this time. I contend that is a new question, and I am astonished at the comparisons which have been made to justify its being passed on without an appeal to the people. It is contended that because two years ago both Houses agreed to pass a resolution for the union of the Lower Provinces, (which was very unlike this resolution), that, therefore, the Legislature has the power and the right to pass this resolution without an appeal to the people. The change contemplated by the former resolution was very different from that to be authorized by this. The former, in fact, made no change in our Constitution or form of Government,—it simply contemplated a union of a number of Counties, with the same rights and privileges, and with the same simple Responsible Government. The Quebec Scheme is one of an entirely complicated nature, and yet to be worked out. To speak of it as the Delegates did shows how little they understood what they have undertaken to propose without any knowledge of its working. That gentlemen of their character and attainments should speak of it so confidently, as of a problem already solved, is astonishing.

It also said that because the British Parliament passed the Reform Bill that, therefore, this measure should pass during the present session. Does not every one know that the Reform Bill was discussed at the polls at many different elections, whereas this question of union or anything like it has never been before the people since they have had an opportunity in a general election of expressing their opinions by selecting representatives? In the speeches made years ago about Union, though all very well in their place, there was nothing practical,—they were merely descriptive of what might occur some twenty or fifty years hence, instead of anything which the Province was then in a condition to adopt.

The honorable and learned member (Hon. Mr. Dickey) says that he has heard no reasons against Union. It is for its friends to give reasons for it. The people of Nova Scotia understand our present Constitution, as they have had some experience of its working, but the scheme of union suggested is one for which neither the statesmen of this Colony, nor of any of the others are prepared, from their previous training or experience.

The Solicitor General referred to the question of Confederation as one of pressing necessity for the defence of the Colonies. Now it has yet to be shown in what way that defence can be more fully attained by union. As regards the advantages to commerce and manufactures, the removal of restrictions is desirable, and that can be obtained without Confederation; but the protective policy of Canada is not calculated to extend, but to limit our commerce, and that is one object Canada seeks in Union, irrespective of the natural channels of trade and the interests of Nova Scotia.

The honorable and learned member (Hon. Mr. Dickey) has spoken of the two Canadas uniting themselves. I would ask whether the constitution of Canada was not suspended, and whether the union was not effected by an act of the Imperial Parliament. I think this question should not be proceeded with until the people of the Province have had an opportunity of considering it fully, and expressing their opinion at a general election.

I doubt that any advantage will be gained by our following the example of the Legislative Council of New Brunswick. I doubt whether the honorable and learned member was justified in what he said as to the state of matters in New Brunswick on this question. From the reports that reach me, I should judge that the case is just the reverse from what he states it to be. I observe that there is a difference in the wording of this resolution, and that introduced in the House of Assembly.

Hon. Solicitor General.—There is a difference. The words "with the Imperial Government" are accidentally omitted in the resolution before this House, but the intention is that the Delegates should act in concert with the British Government.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—Is it intended that the whole question shall be referred to the Imperial Government?

Hon. Solicitor General.—Yes, and if it

is thought more desirable, I will express it in the resolution.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—No. I prefer it as it is. (Laughter.) The difficulties in the Canadian Union have arisen from their Constitution being embodied in an act of the Imperial Parliament. We have been told of the authority of distinguished military and naval officers who favor this question, but the people of Nova Scotia understand their own interests better than any people can for them, and the British Government are willing that they should judge for themselves.

Hon. Mr. McCully.—And fight their own battles.

Hon. Mr. Brown.—Yes, and fight their own battles. The reason why a greater preparation than usual is now necessary does not arise from anything done by these colonies, or by England; but from internal contests in the United States unlooked for by the whole world, and by the States themselves. It is because they have shed so much blood and fought so many battles that they have become, undesired and unlooked for, a great Military Power. I do not myself apprehend any danger of an attack on our humble homes. The difficulty now is from another class of the population. It is not an American question at all. As to any thing yet heard from the Fenians, the Province unaided is able to resist them. As far as that goes, and the use made of it in favor of Confederation, it amounts to nothing.

There are many things which have been said by the honorable seconder of the resolution which it is unnecessary to refute. My own opinion is that Nova Scotia will continue to thrive under any institutions,—either under a union of the Lower Provinces, or a larger union, or by remaining as it is. Nova Scotians will be able to manage their own affairs, and to obtain their share of employment in the world, and therefore I do not apprehend any great difficulty on that score. As regards representation in the Lower House of the Confederate Parliament, I think it is not an unfair proposition. It is a sound principle, and it will be the fault of the people of this colony themselves, if they do not elect men able to assert their rights.

Hon. Mr. McCully.—Hear! hear!

Hon. Mr. Brown.—I think that if this union is so important and so desirable, and continues to be so regarded by the British authorities, and by so many leading minds in the Colonies; and if the scheme has really the advantages claimed for it, the people, when appealed to, will accept it.

It is now the interest of Upper Canada, and has been so for many years, as is well known, to press this union. It was the pressure of the Canadian Delegates in the year after the Quebec Conference that led to the Despatches from the Colonial Secretary urging Confederation on us. That can be seen by the Blue Book on this subject laid on the table of the House this Session. I repeat that if this question is left to the people, and it continues to be regarded as so important and deemed so desirable by so many of the ablest men in the Colonies and elsewhere, I take it for granted that a majority of the people of this country will be found accessible to reason, and to understand their own interests and may support it. The amendment which I shall propose only asks that the matter be delayed until after the next election. Without that I think it unfair to press it. I do not think that the present Legislature is authorized to pass on a measure to subvert the Constitution. I know that honorable members who have stated other opinions disregard this. I consider it highly inexpedient when members of this House undertake to undervalue the opinions of constituencies. The opinions of such members have very little weight in the Legislature, but they have even less weight out of doors, when acting against the known opinions of the people. I beg leave to move the following amendment to the resolution before the House:

"Whereas, the Resolution before the House proposes to change, by the act of the present Legislature, the Constitution and Government of this Province, and with the other Maritime Provinces and Canada to establish a new and untried form of Government; and, whereas, a measure of this magnitude, involving the dearest rights and interest of the people, should not be passed till after the gravest consideration and the constitutional expression of their opinion,

Therefore resolved,—That the Resolution before the House be deferred until the first meeting of the next General Assembly."

I am aware that the honorable and learned seconder of the resolution as well as the Solicitor General will say that the Quebec scheme is abandoned, but we have