

existing circumstances, he considered that the question was in that condition that it could not be dealt with practically. It was obvious that whilst New Brunswick assumed such an attitude, Nova Scotia, however favorable to Union, could not stir in the matter. When the Legislature was called together on the present occasion, the circumstances that existed last year still continued, and it would be altogether futile for Nova Scotia to move at present. Should the time come when the question could be taken up, not as a hypothetical measure, but in a definite, practical shape, it would be quite time enough for the Government to declare their policy. He had never shrunk from expressing his opinions fully and explicitly whenever this great question had come up. He could not understand the position of the hon. member for East Halifax, who declared himself opposed to the scheme of Union, and yet at the same time exhibited such a strong anxiety to bring the question to the notice of the House. He could only hope that the hon. gentleman—and he argued from his views as propounded elsewhere—had seen the error of his ways, and was now anxious to make all the atonement he could. He believed, indeed, that that hon. gentleman had elsewhere gone so far as to charge the Government with a dereliction of duty, because they had not pressed the question on the consideration of the Legislature.

Mr. S. CAMPBELL said that the hon. Provincial Secretary had not given that answer to the questions put to him that was expected of him. That hon. gentleman had exercised some ingenuity in asserting that the statement in question was an after-dinner speech, and that therefore there was no reliance to be placed upon it.

Hon. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY said that he would be very sorry to charge the members of any Administration with making statements in which no reliance could be placed.

Mr. S. CAMPBELL went on to say that the Provincial Secretary had certainly said that it was an after-dinner speech; but did not everybody know that the *British Colonist*, the organ of the Government, had republished the statement. But not only did the Canadian statesman in question make the speech, but there was a number of other prominent public men of Canada present who apparently endorsed the statement. The old adage said, *In vino veritas*; and we might therefore fairly assume that the gentleman who spoke under such influences spoke the truth. On the other hand, it might be considered a legitimate argument against union with Canada if we were told that its public men were persons of such a character that no reliance could be placed on their statements. He could not understand the argument of the Provincial Secretary in respect to New Brunswick. What had that Province to do with Nova Scotia? We were able to attend to our own affairs, independent of the action of any other Colony. He would not dwell further on the subject at present, except to say that the Provincial Secretary had not given an answer to the question put to him by the hon. member for East Halifax, namely—Whether it was the intention of the Government to force the measure upon the House and country, without an appeal to the people? Until that question was answered, the House must believe that there was something in the significant

statement made by the Hon. John A. Macdonald.

Hon. PROV. SECRETARY said that he was glad that the hon. member for Guysboro had called his attention to a question which he had forgotten to answer. He would without hesitation say that the Government would not be a party to any action outside of the Legislature that would interfere with the constitution of the country.

Mr. ANNAND said that the Provincial Secretary had sat down without answering the question put to him—whether any attempt would be made to obtain Confederation without an appeal to the people. On that important point the hon. gentleman had been entirely silent, and the House and country would undoubtedly understand his reasons. The hon. gentleman had said that the question of Union was an open one, and the enquiry naturally suggested itself, were the members of the Administration united on the measure or not. Looking at some of the gentlemen whose opinions he (Mr. A.) knew pretty well, he believed that they were not unanimous. On the other hand, looking at the records to be found in the Assembly, he would be inclined to say that they were unanimous. He would now ask the Provincial Secretary to explain the fact, that he had not carried out the pledge he had made to his colleagues at Quebec—that he would submit this question to the House and country. The spirited gentleman, who was recently Premier of New Brunswick, put the question to the people of that Province, and redeemed his pledge. The question had been submitted for consideration in P. E. Island, and in Newfoundland.—The Gov. of the latter Province had shown he was bound to submit the question irrespective of his advisers. How was it that the Government of Nova Scotia occupied a position so very different? He thought that the Provincial Secretary was shirking the question when he should deal with it manfully—be prepared to stand or fall upon it.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL replied that when he had read the statement in question, he considered that the government of this country had very little responsibility in connection with Confederation. In view, however, of all that the hon. member for East Halifax had expressed elsewhere in respect to Hon. J. A. Macdonald, it was very remarkable that he should now be prepared to attach the slightest credence to anything that hon. gentleman had said.

He (Mr. H.) could certainly say that he was not informed whether the expressions referred to were actually made, or if made, what foundation they had. He had not the slightest idea what the object was in making these statements which appeared to startle some gentlemen so exceedingly. It might be supposed with much reason that the Attorney General West had heard a good deal about reported changes of public sentiment in New Brunswick, and believed that the Provinces were nearer to Confederation than they had been for the past year. Mr. Macdonald might think that the Legislature of Nova Scotia, when it found that the neighboring Province was ready to accept union, would consider whether it should not take up the question, and deal with it practically. He (Mr. H.) was, however, entirely like a man groping in the dark when he