

and opinions of the government of Canada in relation to this subject. Several meetings took place at which these gentlemen at length explained the position of Canada, and the attitude which she then held on the question of Colonial Union. I need scarcely remind the House that the only two objections which existed on the part of the Maritime Provinces—the only two points in which I intimated that any hostility might be found in the Maritime Provinces to the union with Canada, were the large debt which Canada had and the financial condition of that country—that whilst her debt was very much larger than that of the Maritime Provinces, and the government had been obliged to meet the Parliament annually with a large deficit, we were able to exhibit a large surplus revenue. When we ascertained that a government had been formed in Canada with the avowed and ostensible object of effecting a union of the Maritime Provinces with that country—that both of the great parties which existed in that Province had united upon a common platform with a view of uniting all British America—that the debt of Canada and that of the Maritime Provinces could be arranged in such a manner as to enable all to enter the Confederation upon terms of perfect equality, and that Canada was prepared to offer to the Maritime Provinces that for every dollar of less debt that any one of them had relatively to Canada according to population they were prepared to pay to such province interest annually—when we found in addition to that that the financial condition of the country had so improved that instead of closing the financial year with a deficit she was able to show a surplus—when we saw that the prominent objections—those which had been raised here as the only objections that lay in the way of a Union of the Maritime Provinces with Canada—had been removed—we felt we might then fairly arrive at the conclusion that we would be consulting not only the interests but the wishes of the respective Legislatures and people we represented, if we entered upon the larger and more important question of a Union of all British North America. That action has been so strongly challenged upon the part of the Press and of a number of public men in these various provinces, that I think it right I should detain the house for a few moments whilst I offer to them some of the reasons which the government of this province had for believing that in adjourning the question of a Union of these Provinces, and in taking up the larger question of a confederation of all British North America, they were acting in accordance with the views of the Legislatures and with the sentiments of the people of this country.

#### PAST ASPECT OF THE QUESTION OF UNION.

I need not go back ten years to remind the House of the position which this question occupied in 1854 when Mr. Johnston, the leader of the Conservative party in this province, moved a resolution proposing a union of the British North America or a union of Canada, with the Maritime Provinces; that sentiment, instead of exciting hostility—of meeting with

antagonism, received the favorable consideration of the House, and, as far as could be judged, of the people of this province. At that time I need hardly remind the House that Mr. Young, a prominent member of this Legislature, gave in his adherence to the advantages that would be derived from a union of these provinces, and further expressed a strong opinion in favor of a federal union of British America. On that occasion Mr. Howe, also one of the most prominent members of the Legislature, instead of opposing union, placed upon record his opinion during the discussion of the question, that if he were unable to obtain what he considered better, namely representation in the Imperial Parliament, he would be prepared to support a federal union of all B. N. A. But I shall come down to a later period when I had the honour of delivering a lecture at the opening of the Mechanics Institute at St. John, New Brunswick, in 1860, and I took that opportunity, as a public man, of drawing the attention of these provinces to the great importance of a union of all British North America, and to the great advantages that would flow from a consolidation of these provinces with Canada. That lecture was repeated in various parts of this province, and I can only say that, testing as I did the public opinion of this country, neither in the press nor by any expression of the public sentiment in any shape whatever, was I led to believe that the views which I had propounded as a public man did not meet with the entire approval and concurrence of the people of these provinces. A year afterwards, in 1861, hon. Mr. Howe, then leader of the government in this Province, proposed formally in this Legislature a series of resolutions in which he declared that many and great advantages would result from the union of all the Provinces, and in which he asked the concurrence of this House to just such a conference as was recently held at Quebec for the purpose of examining the question, and ascertaining whether it would be practicable to unite these Provinces under one government. The House is well aware that although this resolution was proposed at a time when party antagonism was as rife as at any time in our history—when parties were closely balanced in this house—when a fierce struggle was going on in this Legislature for the government of the country—yet in the presence of that proposal all party hostility gave way, and it met not only with warm support from the opposition benches, but with the entire approval and concurrence of this Legislature. Certainly there were no grounds for supposing that the public sentiment of this country was not in the highest degree favorable to a union with Canada. But coming down to a later period, Mr. McGee visited these Provinces, and I cannot mention that hon. gentleman's name without paying at the same time a just tribute to the great claims he has upon the people of British North America. If there is a statesman in British North America of whom our country many be justly proud it is that hon. gentleman, and if he has one claim to the