

benefit of the doubt, will only assume that we are not all altogether wrong-headed, we hope to show them still farther, as we think we have already shown them, that we are by no means without reason in entering on this enterprise. I submit, however, we may very well dismiss the antecedent history of the question for the present: it grew from an unnoticed feeble plant, to be a stately and flourishing tree, and for my part any one that pleases may say he made the tree grow, if I can only have hereafter my fair share of the shelter and the shade. (Cheers.) But in the present stage of the question, the first real stage of its success—the thing that gave importance to theory in men's minds—was the now celebrated despatch, signed by two members of this Government and an hon. gentleman formerly their colleague, a member of the other House; I refer to the despatch of 1858. The recommendations in that despatch lay dormant until revived by the Constitutional Committee of last Session, which led to the Coalition, which led to the Quebec Conference, which led to the draft of the Constitution now on our table, which will lead, I am fain to believe, to the union of all these provinces. (Hear, hear.) At the same time that we mention the distinguished politicians, I think we ought not to forget those zealous and laborious contributors to the public press, who, although not associated with governments, and not themselves at the time in politics, addressed the public mind, and greatly contributed to give life and interest to this question, and indirectly to bring it to the happy position in which it now stands. Of those gentlemen I will mention two. I do not know whether hon. gentlemen of this House have seen some letters on colonial union, written in 1855, the last addressed to the late Duke of NEWCASTLE, by Mr. P. S. HAMILTON, an able public writer of Nova Scotia, and the present Gold Commissioner of that province; but I take this opportunity of bearing my testimony to his well-balanced judgment, political sagacity and the skilful handling the subject received from him at a very early period. (Hear, hear.) There is another little book written in English, six or seven years ago, to which I must refer. It is a pamphlet, which met with an extraordinary degree of success, entitled *Nova Britannia*, by my hon. friend the member for South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS); and as he has been one of the principal agents in bringing into existence the present Government,

which is now carrying out the idea embodied in his book, I trust he will forgive me if I take the opportunity, although he is present, of reading a single sentence to show how far he was in advance and how true he was to the coming event, which we are now considering. At page 57 of his pamphlet—which I hope will be reprinted among the political miscellanies of the provinces when we are one country and one people—I find this paragraph:—

The dealing with the destinies of a future Britannic empire, the shaping its course, the laying its foundations broad and deep, and the erecting thereon a noble and enduring superstructure, are indeed duties that may well evoke the energies of our people, and nerve the arms and give power and enthusiasm to the aspirations of all true patriots. The very magnitude of the interests involved, will, I doubt not, elevate many amongst us above the demands of mere sectionalism, and enable them to evince sufficient comprehensiveness of mind to deal in the spirit of real statesmen with issues so momentous, and to originate and develop a national line of commercial and general policy, such as will prove adapted to the wants and exigencies of our position.

There are many other excellent passages in the work, but I will not detain the House with many quotations. The spirit that animates the whole will be seen from the extract I have read. But whatever the private writer in his closet may have conceived, whatever even the individual statesman may have designed, so long as the public mind was uninterested in the adoption, even in the discussion of a change in our position so momentous as this, the union of these separate provinces, the individual laboured in vain—perhaps sir, not wholly in vain, for although his work may not have borne fruit then, it was kindling a fire that would ultimately light up the whole political horizon, and herald the dawn of a better day for our country and our people. Events stronger than advocacy, events stronger than men, have come in at last like the fire behind the invisible writing to bring out the truth of these writings and to impress them upon the mind of every thoughtful man who has considered the position and probable future of these scattered provinces. (Cheers.) Before I go further into the details of my subject, I will take this opportunity of congratulating this House and the public of all the provinces upon the extraordinary activity which has been given to this subject since it has become a leading topic of public discussion in the maritime, and what I may