

doing its great influence—spending its enormous resources—on the one side of the sea, and has been a protection, not only to Prince Edward Island, but to the whole of the Lower Provinces. There have been no raids into these Provinces, and, if they were to be invaded, Canada surely would be, and that Province once lost to the British Crown, those Maritime Colonies would fall as easy prey, either to Pennsylvania or some other foe. But, I think, Mr. Chairman, that in view of the hostile spirit manifested by the Government of the United States towards these Colonies, in a variety of ways, it is right that we should take counsel and act in accordance with the views of the British Government. It is scarcely necessary to observe that the United States have no love for Great Britain—no desire to see these Colonies remain a part of the British dominions. And they would rather that they should remain separated and isolated, than be consolidated in power by Confederation, so that, one by one, they might fall an easy prey whenever they should choose to set about their absorption. Isolated, they could be—united, they could not, be absorbed. United, Great Britain would employ her whole power to defend them; isolated she would not. All I wish to say is that the subject having been so well debated last year, I am not disposed to trespass upon your patience, Sir, and that of the House, at present; but I ask that forbearance which is due to any person holding an opinion of his own on a great public question. The Resolution I have submitted is not offensive to those holding views opposed to mine. It is that I believe Confederation would be conducive to the best interests of these Colonies; but I will not press it, but leave it to the people to decide; and I may express the hope and belief that, while hon. members have their own opinions, they will not use offensive expressions, or impute that any member is influenced by improper motives in advocating his own views of the great question now under our consideration. I am influenced by no such motives; and, if I be assailed on any such grounds I will take the earliest opportunity to retaliate. I do not bring any charge against those whose views upon the subject are adverse to my own, nor offer any offence to their sensibilities. They have a perfect right to believe that Confederation will not be conducive to the interests of the Colony. I believe it will; but I beg that we may be permitted to agree to differ. I leave the subject for the present; perhaps before the debate closes I may take an opportunity of offering a few more observations concerning it.

Mr. HOWAT. I must say this is a very moderate Resolution, Mr. Chairman, but there are two or three points in it in which I cannot concur. The hon. member, (Hon. Mr. Whelan) proposes to admit the principle of Confederation; and this Resolution would teach us that, while the hon. member himself would not force us into a union with the other Colonies, yet some other power would do so. Now the hon. member has not clearly explained what power that is by which we are to be forced, but I admit that some grounds for the argument may be drawn from the despatch of the Colonial Minister, who says it is the strong desire of the British Government that we should go into Confederation. But whether he thinks that despatch is to force us into the Union, or whether it is some power in the Colonies, I do not understand. Whatever power it is I do not know how we could resist a Government of which we stand in dread. Up to the present time we have been proud to look to the British flag, not in dread, or as a coercive, but as a protective power; and I do not think, therefore, that we have anything to fear in that direction. When the Governors of the different Colonies were at Downing Street,

we have reason to believe that they were interested to use their influence to carry Confederation; but I am at a loss to know why any force should be brought to bear upon us.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN. Will the hon. member allow me to put him right? I did not suggest, either in my remarks, or by the Resolution which I have submitted, that any force was to be used. Then why should the hon. member dwell so long upon that word?

Mr. HOWAT. Well, I may have mistaken the tenor of the hon. member's remarks, but that was the impression they left upon my mind; and I cannot believe that the British Government, which has always protected the Colonies, would now force us into Confederation. The amendment proposed by the hon. member (Mr. Whelan) is certainly very moderately worded; but it admits the principle of Confederation, and, therefore, I will oppose it. I do not think the Resolutions of the hon. the Leader of the Government are too strong; but I had a small objection to them, which was, that while they do not admit the principle of Confederation, as applicable to this Island, yet I was afraid that they were admitting it in regard to the other Colonies. However, as some hon. members think it will not bear that construction, I am willing to waive that objection, though I consider that there is a pressure brought to bear upon the other Colonies, which, in my opinion, is hardly constitutional. And I would regret, to the latest day of my life were I in any way to assist in strengthening that pressure, which might result in carrying Confederation. I believe the day has come when we must make a stand for the preservation of our independence; for, when we see a pressure brought to bear upon the other Colonies, we may be sure that our turn is coming. If the other Colonies go into Confederation, no doubt a pressure will be brought to bear upon us also; and then does it not remain for us to make a united effort to resist any attempt to take away our constitution, our revenue, and, I might almost say, everything else belonging to us? I was opposed to Confederation last year, for I saw there was danger even in admitting the principle of it, and I am just as much, or more, opposed to it now. Suppose, for argument sake, we should even go into Confederation with terms with which we would be satisfied, would we be safe then? I should say no. Does not the British Government recognize the right to change the constitution? Now, if this is the case, though I do not profess to have any great knowledge in constitutional matters, I believe that, even if we should go into it with the most favourable terms, the Federal Government would have power to change the constitution, and therefore we would not be secure.

Hon. Sol. GENERAL. I would like to know what authority has laid down a constitutional law of that kind?

Mr. HOWAT. Well, it appears to me that the constitution of the United States is undergoing a change; and if we go to former times we will see that even the British Constitution has undergone a change. Surely then, if those constitutions have been changed, it is reasonable to suppose that an agreement of this kind might be changed also. And considering that we would be such a small portion of the Confederacy, our voice would not be heard in it. We would be the next thing to nothing. Indeed I would almost as soon be without any voice in it at all. We would be as small a minority as the hon. member on my right (Hon. Mr. Laird) and myself are in this House. Are we then going to surrender our rights and liberties? It is just a question of "self or no self." Talk about a Local Legislature! It would be a mere farce. We would not even have the control of our local affairs, for every trading or petty bill would have to be sent to Ottawa for