

question of such gravity—which demands that the members of the house should rise to the great emergency, and look with a single eye to the interests of the country; only to that course that is calculated to promote the advancement of our common country, and perpetuate the great privileges which, as British subjects, we enjoy; I regret, I say, Sir, in approaching a question of such deep importance, that the conduct of a portion of the press in this Province, controlled by a gentleman within this Legislature, occupying a high and responsible position, should make it my duty at the outset to notice, not the arguments—for that time has passed—but unfounded calumnies and misrepresentation. The time has passed when the opponents of a union of British North America can meet the friends of that great question on the platform, in the press, or on the floor of Parliament, and discuss it as becomes public men and statesmen, upon the principles and leading features of the scheme proposed. Instead of that, the opponents of union have resorted to appeals to the passions,—to such an amount of personal vituperation as never before I believe in the history of this country, was dragged into the consideration of a great public question upon any occasion. I should fail in what I owe to myself and to the great question with which I am at this moment undertaking to deal, and in what I owe to this deliberative assembly, if I did not in my place in Parliament, notice at the very outset the position that the opponents of this question have assumed, and the strange liberties they have taken with this Legislature. I would be justified on the present occasion, in dealing with this matter in a very different form,—any member of this Legislature would only be discharging his duty if he dealt with it in a different spirit,—and in asking the Legislature if the inherent privileges which the members of this assembly enjoy are to be trampled under foot in our very presence, and by those holding high and responsible positions within these very walls, and, at the same time, acting in the capacity of editor, publisher, and proprietor of a newspaper in this city. Is he to be allowed to assail the character and integrity of members of this house with impunity? not simply to hold up this Legislative Assembly as devoid of intelligence, as one of the most despicable bodies of men that have ever been permitted to deal with the public affairs of a free country; but to go further, and charge in the most direct terms members with being influenced by motives most base and corrupt? I hold in my hand the *Morning Chronicle* of April 6, last, in which a correspondent, over the signature of "Brutus"—a well known gentleman, closely identified with the publisher and editor of this paper,—who has ventured to speak of members of this house,—of his own political associates in this Legislature as well as of those who are opposed to him,—in terms not only of opprobrium and reproach, but which are alike dishonorable and insulting to every member of this deliberative assembly. He says:—

"As it is well known, a few designing politicians, doing the work of conspirators, traitorously contemplate the destruction of our constitution, and the transfer of our revenues to a set of men who are far away, and who care nothing for us or for the preservation of those interests which are as dear to us as

are the crimson tides that circulate through our veins."

I ask the house what must be the position of public men in this country who are called upon to deal with a question so vital to our interests as a union of British North America, when they are obliged to descend to such language as that? I need not remind the house when the Government was called upon to deal with the question, they invited the aid and co-operation of the leaders of the political party opposed to them; and that these gentlemen, thus called upon to share the responsibility in connection with a matter of such vital import, have acted from the first in entire unison with those who had asked their assistance. I do not mean to say that the members of the Government and the gentlemen opposed to them, who were delegates to the Quebec Conference, always saw eye to eye, I do not mean to say that we were not obliged on many occasions to arrive at a common result by a compromise of our individual opinions; but in the measure as a whole, that was presented to the world, we were all heartily and thoroughly united. Then, I ask, what is the position of the organ of the party of which the hon. and learned member for Colchester, (Mr. Archibald,) is the leader, when, in dealing with this question, they denounce that gentleman in the presence of this Assembly, as a conspirator, traitorously endeavoring to strike down the rights and liberties of his country.—A cause which requires an advocacy like that must indeed be in want of arguments on which to found a claim to the support of the people. Again I read:—

"Yesterday, however, on the floors of the Assembly Room, bygone promises were unscrupulously repudiated, confidence betrayed, and barefaced treachery exhibited. I sat in the gallery, and witnessed the perpetration of this act of political turpitude, and heard the whisper circulated from ear to ear—"The traitor has been bought." The scene reminded me of what transpired in the Parliament House in Dublin, at the commencement of the present century, when the seductive influence of British gold corrupted a Parliament, and professed patriotism was bought and sold like bank stock, or any other marketable commodity. I asked myself whether the temptations of either proffered official aggrandisement and emoluments, or the rejection of a candidate's claim to membership of a social club, was a sufficient pretext for party treachery, for the glaring tergiversation of oft repeated and publicly avowed opinions,—and what is more, for the betrayal of a country's dearest interests, and the diabolical destruction of its constitution."

When the opponents of Union have been obliged to take a course like that, they have given the best evidence that their cause is an untenable one, which cannot be sustained by public men. Here we find the best leading minds of the party with which the hon. member is associated, denounced by their own press, as men who have been recreant to the best interests of the country. Again, in the editorial of the *Morning Chronicle* of April 9, we read:—

"But whatever the people of this country believed, at the period referred to, there is too much reason to apprehend that their hopes and expectations will never be realized. A majority of the members of the Assembly, it is said, has been secured, corrupted by influences frightful to contemplate, to vote our free Parliament out of existence, and with it the rights and privileges we so dearly prize."

Here is a charge made in the most emphatic