

Division of the county of Halifax, against this scheme, although they have had abundant time to do so. It is hardly necessary for me to allude to their sentiments, since the hon. member who has last spoken has shown that the Western Division of Halifax has not sent in a single petition against the Confederation of these Colonies (Cheers.) Before I came into this Legislature—before I had any idea of political life, I was in favour of a Union of British North America. I was in favour of it because I thought it would give a higher standard to the people—that it would give them an elevation of sentiment and thought, and a respectability of position that they cannot expect to have in their present isolated position. Therefore it has been from my first inception of public life that I have earnestly and zealously advocated the object which the public men of the day have in view—a Union of British North America. When I looked at the state of feeling in this House last session, I was of opinion that there were hardly half a dozen of men belonging to the party with which I was connected, that were ready to come up to the mark and vote for a Union of the Provinces. To my utter surprise, on the meeting of this House, I found that an entire change had taken place in the opinions and feelings of gentlemen, and I of course could not otherwise than suppose that they are influenced by the knowledge they have gained of the views of their constituents during the recess of Parliament. I have in my conversations with members of this House stated over and over again that I was not in favour of a Union of these Provinces without the consent of the people. I feel that with their consent a Union might be consummated that would be highly beneficial, and be regarded with esteem and respect.

I have offered my opinions so often on this subject, that if the question was not to be taken to-night, I would not raise my voice, for I am utterly unable to address the House at length, labouring as I have been for some days under indisposition. Now I find that the discussion of this question in the Canadian Parliament, in 1865, occupied from the 3rd Jan. to the 26th March. The House discussed the question as in Committee, and everybody had an ample opportunity of expressing his views. The subject, however, has been so often discussed in this Legislature—at public meetings, and in the Press, that it is an old question here, whilst it was a comparatively new one in Canada. Therefore, it is not all necessary that a great deal of time should be occupied with the discussion of this question.

If we regard the condition of these Provinces we must at once see that the time has come when a change must take place in their present condition. They have, to some extent, outgrown their present Colonial condition—their state of pupillage; and, therefore, we believe the time has come when they want to be united for greater security—for mutual protection. I believe that the people of this Colony do wish to continue the connection with Great Britain, and if Union is an indispensable condition to the perpetuity of that connection, as we are told by the British Government and statesmen, we should not hesitate to adopt it. Great Britain has turned her attention towards the condition of these Colonies; she has looked at

them with a parental regard, and offered them her advice; and it is only our duty that we accept that advice in the same spirit in which it is offered.

In view of the importance of this question, it is necessary that we should all approach its discussion with that gravity and respect that is due from us as the representatives of the people. In the commencement of the debate I raised my voice against anything like a display of personal feeling and party prejudices—that we should deal with the question in a becoming spirit, and entire regard to the interests of the people who have entrusted their affairs to our care.

I do not intend to refer to the speeches which have been made on this question, but there is one part of the address of the hon. member for Yarmouth that I cannot allow to pass without a comment. He pointed to the map and showed the difference of latitude and longitude between Nova Scotia, Montreal, Toronto, and other parts of Upper Canada, for the purpose of shewing that the characteristics of the country were unfavorable for union. I confess the confederacy will not present that compact appearance which the United States present, but when you look at the difference of longitude between Maine and California, you need not think of the difference between Halifax and Toronto. You do not hear of California being discontented with the Union, separated as she is by natural barriers from the rest of her sister States. She is a flourishing member of the Union. Railroads and telegraphs have brought communities together heretofore at distances which precluded the possibility of feeling. It will therefore be seen that the argument of the hon. member does not amount to a great deal after all. When we look back at the position which this question has occupied for a great many years, we find that all of the leading minds of this province have advocated Union; but it was not until 1863 that Canada was willing to listen to propositions from the Maritime Provinces. Circumstances have changed in the Province of Canada, and as an evidence of the feelings of the people I need only refer to the fact, that after the Quebec scheme was matured, no less than 50 constituencies were appealed to, and only four candidates appeared on the hustings opposed to the scheme, and only one was returned in opposition. Here you have an evidence of the popularity of the scheme of Confederation in Canada. The result of the elections in New Brunswick has been different, but now we find that a great change is rapidly taking place in the sentiments of the people of that Province. In Newfoundland the question has assumed a most satisfactory aspect; although occupying an isolated position, the legislature has shown a most favorable disposition to enter the union when Nova Scotia and the other provinces give their assent to the measure. As respects Prince Edward Island, I am not able just now to say anything definite, but no doubt she will also fall in in good time. It has been said by the Provincial Secretary that a Union was impracticable whilst New Brunswick occupied a position of uncompromising hostility to the scheme, but the feeling of that Colony, as I have just stated, is undergoing a constant change, and it is therefore