

**Speech of Mr. Bourinot.**

MR. BOURINOT said:—As no one appears desirous this afternoon of commencing the debate I shall endeavour as briefly as possible to state the opinions I entertain on the subject under consideration. No doubt the question has been pretty well exhausted. Many able speeches have already been made both in and out of the house, and the press has gone into the subject very fully; but I think it is the duty of every member in this Legislature to state his views. It is the opinions expressed in this house that will influence the people the most. In accordance with the resolution moved by the Provincial Secretary last winter, a delegation was appointed for the purpose of conferring with others from New Brunswick and P. E. Island with the object of uniting the Maritime Provinces. You are all aware of the history of this delegation at P. E. Island, and therefore it is unnecessary I should refer to it. I cannot refrain, however, from alluding to the composition of the delegation itself.—First of all, four out of the five were members of the Bar—the fifth being the Provincial Secretary who, I daresay, is as good a lawyer as the others. This fact, however, at the very outset produced distrust and no little dissatisfaction throughout the country. It was quite right and proper that the Provincial Secretary should be a member of that delegation—his position and great abilities will not be denied by any man in this country. The leader of the opposition was also one of the number, and it was but right that he should be, but what I complain of is, that the mercantile and other interests were not represented in this delegation. It is true that the Provincial Secretary has in speeches at Temperance Hall and elsewhere told you that several mercantile gentlemen connected with the Legislature were asked to be members of the delegation—Hon. J. H. Anderson, Mr. Tobin, and Mr. Locke, but that for reasons given they were unable to go. When the services of these gentlemen could not be obtained the selection fell upon the hon. Mr. McCully, and the remaining members of the delegation were the Attorney General, and hon. Mr. Dickey from Cumberland. Now I must say it would have given far greater satisfaction if the government had looked around these benches and selected gentlemen who could well have formed a part of that delegation and represented the mercantile interests of this country. And let me ask why was it that in making the selection they should have ignored the Island of Cape Breton altogether? Were there no men to be found there who were capable of taking part in that delegation? And I can point out many around these benches, and one hon. gentleman from the other branch of the Legislature who could as well represent the mercantile interest as those named. Look at little P. E. Island; no greater in extent, certainly not to be compared with Cape Breton in resources; it was represented by no less than seven members in Canada. Look again at the fact that no less than three gentlemen were taken from one county alone. That favored county of Cumberland sent the Provincial Secretary, Mr. Dickey, and Mr. McCully. Therefore it will be seen that in the selection of the delegates the interests of the different sections of the province were altogether disregarded; and under these circumstances it is not strange that

at the very initiation of this question dissatisfaction arose. I can assure you the feeling was very widely extended in the section I represent, for Cape Breton, as in many other cases, was entirely blotted out. And I was nearly forgetting to mention another fact in connection with the delegation at Charlottetown.—My hon. friend from Cumberland (Mr. McFarlane) happened also to be present at the time the delegation assembled—no doubt it was thought to be an act of wise foresight to have him at hand in case some accident should happen to the other delegates from Cumberland. You all know what took place at Charlottetown. Gentlemen from Canada joined the delegates from the Maritime Provinces and mysterious conferences ensued. A great deal of what took place there has not yet come to light, but it will be known hereafter. When hereafter those private correspondence come to light—as occurs so often in history—we shall learn some facts which will give the world a better idea than they have now of the motives and reasons that influenced the delegates in coming to the conclusion they did. These gentlemen then left Charlottetown and came to Halifax, and when they had done so, I received a telegram inviting me to a banquet to be given to the Canadian delegates. Just imagine a telegram inviting me to come to a dinner party given at a place 300 miles distant from where I resided. What took place at that famous dinner party? Any number of speeches were made. Union was descanted on at length and the Canadian delegates as well as the Provincial Government, no doubt, thought that the public mind was quite decided on the subject and satisfied with the expression of opinion on that occasion. Then they went on to Canada under the impression that the people of these provinces were quite ready to accept the results of their conferences. We all know what took place in Canada. The reception given to our delegates was very flattering—a perfect ovation—and I am proud to say that some of the gentlemen that represented this province did credit to themselves and Nova Scotia. Having finished the business of the delegation they returned to Nova Scotia where they soon learned the state of the public mind. The meetings at Temperance Hall gave them indications of the state of public opinion, even in a city which was likely to be benefited, whatever might be the case with respect to the rest of the province. In this city which had so much at stake they had actually to listen to derisive cheers and hisses. Then a meeting was held at Windsor. In that town the Provincial Secretary endeavored to impress on the minds of the people, that no appeal to the constituencies was necessary. He went into the history of the scheme at length to show that it had been before the country for years, and that under such circumstances it was unnecessary that the people should be consulted in reference to the subject. Now that the people should be told that they were to have nothing to do with deciding so important a question as changing the constitution of the country, but that the house could deal with it irrespective of the wishes of those they represented, was something most preposterous to propound in a country like this, enjoying the privileges of responsible government—where the people are the fountain of authority. The Prov. Sec'y