

But certain gentlemen deputized by some one or other—I do not think there will be anybody hereafter ready to father the act—have written a remonstrance against Union to the Colonial Secretary. If ever there was a libel on the British constitutional system—if responsible government was ever brought down to the very depths degradation, as far as it was in the power of certain parties to put it there, it was when the three unauthorized men, two of whom had been rejected by the people at the polls, presented themselves at the foot of the throne, and told the Imperial Government that notwithstanding our system of government the people are too ignorant, and the Parliament is too corrupt to be entrusted with the free institutions we enjoy, and asked that they should be considered the true constitutional authorities to whom the Government and Parliament of the mother country should pay respect. I know not who authorized this delegation, but I was not a little surprised to find these gentlemen who presented themselves with the authority of some one or other, asking the Government and Parliament of England to accept them as our representatives and to ignore the voice of the government and legislature of this country, but especially was I astonished to find them putting their names to a state paper in which they declared that the position of the people of New Brunswick—where the very thing they are now asking for has been done—is perfectly contemptible and compared the verdict they have given at the polls to that of a brow-beaten jury under Jeffreys. Yet these same gentlemen, professing to represent the sentiments of the people of Nova Scotia, ask the Government of England to allow the people to express their opinions at the polls—on the ground that they had such an appeal in New Brunswick.

The hon. gentleman has taken exception to a statement made by Mr. Watkin. I admit freely that that statement was too strong, and to some extent inaccurate. I think, however, the hon. member for East Halifax who was one of the deputation will admit that it is not a very easy matter to get gentlemen constantly occupied with questions of great national importance immediately touching their own country to understand all the "ins and outs" of our colonial discussions and struggles. I am glad, however, to be able to fully acquit myself of having misled any one on this question in England. I took the liberty of placing in the hands of Mr. Watkin and every other member of the House of Commons an authentic statement of my own, and in that document I have shown accurately as I contend every step that has been taken in the progress of this question. I may state to the House, and I do it in all sincerity, that from the first I have never entertained but one opinion, and that is, the intelligent sentiment of the people of this country is in favour of Union. I do not say that I have ever felt it would be a wise experiment to appeal to the people on this question; that would be an en-

tirely unprecedented proceeding; but I know enough of appeals to the people to be aware that it is quite possible for the public sentiment to be in favour of a measure, and yet for this measure to be unsuccessful when put to the people. I believe a public man is bound in the advocacy of public measures to study as far as possible what is required to promote the public good, and to go as far as he can in his public legislation as the public sentiment will sustain him. I have been, perhaps, as strong a party man as any in this country, but I am proud to be able to say, that anxious as I have been to promote the views of party, much as I believe in the existence of parties in the state, and the advantage of having a strong opposition as well as government,—anxious as I am to serve the party from whom I have received such unqualified support and co-operation—I am able to say that I have regarded one thing as of paramount importance, and that is, the interests of my country. It is not the first occasion on which as a public man, standing in the responsible position in which it has pleased the people of this Province to place me, I have brought forward measures and advocated them with all the zeal and earnestness that I could bring to their discussion, although at the same time I believed them to be as fatal to the interests of my party as it was possible for any measures to be. I need not tell the House what was the sentiment of the country in regard to taxation for the support of schools. I need not tell the House how perfectly I was satisfied that, in the ranks of the party which sustained me throughout this country, there was a very large body of people who would not only resist, but resent such a change in the law as would impose a large burthen upon the people for the support of the schools. But I came to this table, and imposed such a burthen, under the conviction that it was my duty so to do, for my conscience told me that that measure was imperatively required to promote the best interests of the country at large; but although I expected to produce temporary dissatisfaction, I never had a doubt what the result would be after the people had had abundant opportunity of testing the merits of the law.

I believe that the intelligent sentiment of the country is in favour of this Union, but then the mode by which it might be defeated would be this: Whilst the opponents of the measure in the ranks of the conservative party would withdraw their confidence and support from the government, gentlemen who oppose the measure, but prefer another party in this province, would combine with the former, for the purpose of defeating the men in power. How could I have any doubts as to the intelligent sentiment of this country? Long ago it was acknowledged as a question removed from party—one which public men, irrespective of party considerations, should unite in promoting. When it was found that the government must under all circumstances stand or fall by this question, then for the first time were public men who had been them-