

Were the Governor to appoint a Delegation without an appeal to the people, he would be guilty of an unconstitutional act, unless he had a majority in the Government to support him in doing so.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN. I mean to say a word about the amendment. You know, Mr. Chairman, that I have not trespassed on the patience of the Committee, and you, Sir, have expressed a degree of forbearance highly commendable during this long debate; but it would be unwise to trespass upon your time at this late hour with any lengthy remarks; yet I think I should say a word or two in reference to some remarks which have been made in this debate. Before doing so, let me express my satisfaction as the calmness and moderation with which this debate has been conducted. It is certainly an improvement on the debates of last year, and leads us to suppose that, though we are not improving very extensively in regard to Confederation, yet we are, in good temper; but I believe we are also improving in our views of Confederation—improving inasmuch as we admit that if the other Province unite we cannot stand out. I will not trespass upon your time, but I have a right to ask the indulgence of this hon. Committee for five minutes to refuse some observations made in opposition to my views yesterday evening and to-day. Yesterday evening in particular, I was assailed by my hon. friend from Cascamper (Mr. Howlan) on the ground of my incoherence in making a speech in this House, in 1854, on this question of Confederation. But it was not on the broad question of Confederation that I then spoke, and the hon. member knows that he did not fairly represent me, and he was in reference to a Legislative Union of the Colonies, and he knows that I have always been opposed to a Legislative Union.

Mr. HOWLAN. I did not state anything in disparagement of the hon. member; but I showed that the views held by him now were not the same as those held by him then. I quoted this passage:—

"I care not for the nature of the Union, whether it be Federal or Legislative; either will be shared while we remain tied to the apron strings of our venerable mother—Great Britain. The time will come when, as foreboded by the statesmen and politicians of Britain, the Colonies will be cast off, and when this time shall arrive, they may, with far more propriety, than at present, discuss the principle and details of a Union, either Federal or Legislative."

Hon. Mr. WHELAN. I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to protect me in my position on the floor. I do not wish to hinder independent members from speaking, especially young members; and I am always willing to give to my friend, the junior member from Prince George, a latitude which I would not be disposed to give to others. The extract from this speech he has read ought to be thoroughly misapprehended upon my mind, inasmuch as it has been pulled to it so frequently. It does not establish the proof of my incoherence. I protest against it. That speech will show that I was not favorably disposed towards a Legislative Union at that time. A Federal Union is another question. In what light did I view it, or how was it viewed by other members of this House?—that we would still be subservient to my hon. Colonial Office as we are now?—It is not that the experience I have gained—that the intelligence communicated to me from other quarters—not that I am inspired by undue motives that cause an apparent change of sentiment on my part—but that I now a perfect right to exercise my judgment in reference to this and other matters. But even if I admit that there was a slight shade of inconsistency on my part, why should I now be brought up as an argument against Confederation? We know that a great change of opinion has taken place in all the other Colonies. Has it not been the case in Canada? And in New Brunswick, where the Government came in with a large majority, a little more than twelve months ago, has not a change taken place there? In all the other Colonies public opinion has undergone a change in reference to this question? It has changed in the Nova Scotia Legislature, inasmuch as last winter Dr. Tupper could not venture to ask the House to pass a Resolution in favour of Confederation, and this year it has been carried by a majority of 31 to 19. Does not this show that there is a change in public senti-

ment?—That it is progressing with the progress of intelligence all over the Continent? Does it not show that public men have a right to exercise the privilege at times of correcting their ideas? I scorn the man—I say it without disrespect to any gentleman in this House or our community—I scorn the man who says he is incapable of changing his mind on important public questions, and who, when the time comes, if it is in conformity with the programme of the age in which I live. And I do not think I bring any discredit upon myself by doing so. This has been the character by which public men have been distinguished in Great Britain and all over the world. I would allude to one who has changed his opinion on this question. I mean the Hon. Mr. Howe of Nova Scotia. He was at one time decidedly in favour of a Confederation of all the British North American Colonies. Now he is not. The reason why I shall not explain to you at present; but I believe that if he had been at the Quebec Conference he would have voted a very different part from what he has done.

Now, the hon. member from Cascamper has referred to the speech of Mr. Gladstone wherein he says—

"We are told that Canada and New Brunswick are threatened with fire and slaughter from the revenge of the Fenians for the wrongs inflicted by England upon Ireland; and this I must say, that if the men of Canada and New Brunswick, who are wholly gullible of these wrongs—be they what they may—who are not entangled in the controversy, who have no more to do with it than the people of the British Islands—if the Fenians, as they call themselves in America, are capable of the abominable wickedness of passing their frontier and of making their impotent miserable attacks, which they will be (they) to carry desolation over these peaceful districts and among these harmless colonists, then, I say, that so far from your treating the outbreak of these men—as they are Americans of whom they like—with allowance or indulgence, no more execrable manifestations of folly or gullibility have ever been made in the annals of the human race from the time that it commenced its existence upon the earth. (Cheers.) Men who are capable of such proceedings would at once by their inhumanity and their guilt place themselves entirely beyond the sympathy of the whole civilized world. (Loud cheers.)"

What interpretation can the hon. member put upon these words? Is it that Great Britain finds the Colonies in a position to help themselves, then the power of a British Government will be employed to supplement their resources for defence. Can any hon. member place any other interpretation on these words? Again, Mr. Gladstone says in the same speech:—

"I feel the fullest confidence that those men who inhabit the provinces of British America, who have professed from our infancy, and who are governed by principles in the main our own, know well how to defend their lives, their wives, and children, and if, unexpectedly, the need arose, that is no resource possessed by this country, and they would not fairly spend to assist them in their holy work. (Cheers.)"

What does that indicate? A feeling on the part of the British Government that the people of those Colonies will have to defend their own homes, and in the event of their failing to do so then Great Britain will withdraw her support. I will not address myself to the question at present as to whether we should be influenced by the opinions of Statesmen in England or not. The hon. member from Cascamper gave the opinion of the British Minister; but he did not give his words. I have given the words of Mr. Gladstone's speech to show the connection in which they were used, and they plainly indicate that when the Colonies use their proper amount of inducement to protect themselves, then the power of Great Britain would be used in their behalf. That was the opinion I set forth last year. It is borne out by the opinion of Mr. Gladstone, and also by Her Majesty's Colonial Minister. I will read an extract from the Colonial Minister's dispatch, not only for the information of the hon. member from Cascamper, but other members who may have forgotten it:—

"But there is the consideration with Her Majesty's Government feel is more especially their duty to press upon the Legislatures of Nova Scotia, to look to the determination of the Colonies to be ever exhibited, to regard the defence of the colonies as a matter of Imperial concern, the colonies must recognize a right and upon acknowledge an obligation incumbent on the Home Government to urge with sedulous and just attention, by law if possible, they consider most expedient on the part of the colonies, with a view to their own defence."