

is, in my opinion, whether we shall unite with the adjoining colonies or remain disunited, and isolated with the chances of annexation. Mr. Locke has said that Confederation will lead to the latter—if he could convince me of that he would find an opponent of the measure as determined as any man in this country, but I support it because I feel and believe, and am convinced in my heart and conscience that if we remain as we are the time will soon come when we will be absorbed into the American Republic. My hon. friend from Halifax, who is leading the present opposition, published that which met my approbation a short time ago, when he declared that a change was approaching, that something must be done, that this country could not remain as it was, and that our future must be looked in the face. I felt and still feel that these were the words of truth and soberness, and I believe that unless these Colonies proceed to Confederation we cannot long continue dependencies of the British Crown. What has occurred since last session? When the friends of the measure stated last year that they believed that the Reciprocity Treaty was about to be abrogated we were told that this was nonsense, that American interests were too deeply concerned, and that they valued reciprocity as much as we—yet have we not seen it come to pass in the teeth of offers, on the part of our government, such as none of us would have thought of making a few years ago, and such as few men in this country would be disposed to concur in. So determined were the Americans to abolish that treaty that not only were the arguments of our delegates treated with disdain, but afterwards, when a bill was brought into Senate in connection with the subject, containing propositions that would be indignantly refused here, they refused to receive it. Why did they refuse such a measure introduced by their leading minds, and approved by Mr. Morrill? What answer do their leading or answering to the question? They tell us that it was because they expect soon to be able to annex these Colonies,—that without free trade with them we cannot exist, and that we will soon be glad to seek for admission to the Union. The paid officer of the American Government in reporting on this question broadly put to the government and Senate that the only alternatives were reciprocity or absorption, and while declaring that reciprocity was beneficial to them—yet advised its refusal as favourable to Annexation. They have refused to renew that treaty influenced by these motives. It has been said that the United States have no desire to annex these Colonies. Can we believe such a statement? Look at our fisheries at our mineral resources, at the extent of our wood lands and can we imagine that they are not most anxious to possess these Provinces, and especially Nova Scotia. I feel, therefore, in looking at the question, and for other reasons not necessary to mention, that without confederation annexation is before us. The abrogation of the treaty owes its origin to the desire of the American people to bring us within their borders, and I am firmly and honestly convinced that it is my duty to say to my constituents and to the people of Nova Scotia that I am willing to do anything—to resort to almost any measure rather than run the risk of such a

consequence as that. I do not mean to say by this that the scheme before us will not be very beneficial to the people of this country. My own opinions have undergone no change on this subject, but I have resolved to take this bold and straightforward stand—to declare that we should confederate, and that we should do it now because I feel that the step is demanded by the exigencies which surround us. I trust in God that I may never live to see the Stars and Stripes floating over Citadel Hill.—I trust that before we are annexed I and my children shall have gone to the land of the shades, and that not one of us may be left to see our country in such a position. We have been told by the gentleman who preceded me that Confederation would weaken the ties that bind us to the parent state,—but have we its subordinate officers, and the press of that not the government of Great Britain and all country, and among ourselves our best minds, lay and clerical, urging it on us. Do they look favourably on the scheme because they believe it will weaken the ties that bind us to them? I was sorry to hear one member say that the English people would be glad to be rid of us; I do not believe that such a feeling exists in Great Britain, nor that with few exceptions there are any men in Great Britain willing or anxious to part with us. The only real question remaining in my mind is whether an appeal to the people should not have been had. It was suggested by Mr. Annand that the people be called on to vote on the question of Confederation alone, but I cannot think that he seriously proposed that we should do what no British country ever did before—resort to a *plebiscite* on this question.

Mr. S. CAMPBELL.—It has been done in Nova Scotia.

Mr. BLANCHARD continued:—This reference is to the vote taken upon the Municipal Corporations' bill, but this was simply as to the adoption in each county of a purely local measure; but did any one ever hear of a question of Colonial policy being so submitted? That precedent is no parallel to this case, and I challenge gentlemen who take that side of the question to lay their hands upon any case in which a question of this kind was sent in that way to the people. If such a mode is un-British, un-English, and unreliable, how are we to adapt it? What are we to depend on for the decision? We recently took away from a large portion of the people the electoral franchise, are we to send this question to the electors, or to the whole people, and under what regulations? We have heard a good deal about appeals to the people, and I would like to look back at the history of this country to shew, as I believe I can, that such an appeal is not desirable or necessary. What did we do a few years ago? We passed a bill by which the franchise was nearly doubled in the numbers of the persons called on to exercise it; and is not the franchise the source of all right and power? Did the opponents of that measure ask an appeal to the people? Not at all. Afterwards the suffrage was still further extended and made almost universal without a word about appeals to the people. Not long ago, when Mr. Johnston was in power he introduced a bill altering to a large extent, the franchise and re-distributing the