

way in which this question has been approached by the Provincial Secretary. Let me at the outset invite the attention of the House to the state of this country two years ago. There had been discussions in past years in reference to Union, and there had been diversities of opinion, some being in favor of a Legislative and some in favor of a Federal Union; but I challenge any gentleman to show me that beyond the mere expression of abstract opinion in favor of Union, any resolution was ever proposed. The country was then peaceful, contented and prosperous; no one here thought of changing our constitution for the sake of connection with Canada. Some of us entertained views favorable to a union of the Maritime Provinces, but no one dreamed of giving up our present institutions and accepting a subordinate status in another country. I then ask, How does this question of Confederation arise? By what necessity has it been produced? Does it arise from the necessities of the people or Legislature of Nova Scotia? Why, sir, we all know that but for the necessities of Canada, as admitted by the Provincial Secretary himself and by his colleague in the delegation, that question would never have been pressed upon our attention. Am I to understand, as was said elsewhere, that owing to the Canadian necessities—owing to the fact that the Government of Canada had come to a dead lock, there being three changes of administration in three years, and Parliamentary Government having become impossible, therefore it was that the people of Canada to rid themselves of their difficulties, financial and political, cast their eyes upon these Provinces as affording a means of escape? We all know what took place in 1864. A resolution passed authorising the appointment of delegates to confer on the question of a Maritime Union; those delegates proceeded to Charlottetown, and there they were met by Canadian speculators in politics, by whom they were spirited away to Quebec, and were seduced from their allegiance to this country and from the mission with which we charged them. In October, after a fortnight's debate at Quebec, and amidst exhaustive festivities, they passed resolutions favorable to a union of the Provinces of British America. These gentlemen have said that this delegation, was authorised by the ministers of the Crown and by the Governor General, but it had no authority from us. The debate at Quebec was conducted in secret, all its deliberations were carried on with closed doors, and there is good reason to believe that but for the accidental publication of those resolutions the scheme might have been passed at last Session. I was in England when these negotiations were going on, and did not return until a few days before the resolutions were received. My opinion as to the scheme was asked, my answer was "I have not yet made up my mind, but will take time to consider." I did take time, and having occasion to make a journey of some 200 miles I put the papers in my pocket, read them, and when I returned I had come to the conclusion that the scheme was unjust to this Province, politically and financially, and that I would be recalcitrant to my responsibility to the country if I gave it my sup-

port. We may be told that the proposition for union was received with acclamation by the people of England,—let any man go to England to-day, and although the allusion is somewhat dispelled we hear it said: "the Colonies should unite because the time has come when you should assume the burthen of your own defence." That sentiment will be found in the despatches from beginning to end, it was the burthen of Mr. Cardwell's recent speech at Oxford. With reference to the opinion of the Colonial Secretary of State I would say—when the scheme of union was sent home for approval it was at once indorsed, in 1864 the Imperial Government had no policy on the subject, no desire that we should be confederated, but on the contrary, the Lieutenant Governors were restricted to the consideration of a Maritime Union. I will be told that after the receipt of despatches from this side of the water the Colonial Secretary consented to delegates proceeding to Quebec my argument is that Her Majesty's Government, until these representations were sent to the Colonial Office, had no policy in reference to union. What followed? In consequence of strong despatches from the Governor General representing that union was popular in all the Provinces, under this inspiration and believing that the thirty-three delegates truly represented the sentiments of the people Her Majesty's Ministers committed themselves to the policy of union. I do not hesitate to say, and in saying it I reveal no confidential communication, that I had an interview with Mr. Cardwell, in which I gave him the independent view taken by these Provinces,—for the first time that gentleman obtained the opinions held by the opposition in this House, and the views I gathered from that interview were of this effect: "Her Majesty's Government have committed themselves to the scheme and are therefore bound, if possible, to carry it out."—That is the true position of the question at the Colonial Office. Mr. Cardwell committed a grave error which no British statesman in the Colonial Office ever committed before in expressing his approbation of a scheme which had never been submitted to the ratification of the representatives of the people. We have been told that the public opinion in England is in favor of union. Not one in ten of the people of England know that there are such places as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and few have heard even of Canada. The first idea arising in their minds is that the union will be a good thing because the union of the three kingdoms was good; but I met only two in during my visits to the Mother Country who did not believe that the scheme before us was a Legislative union; and when I mentioned what it really was—that we were to have a general government and then five local Governments, there was not an intelligent man with whom I met that did not treat it with contempt. The leading and animating opinion of the people of England was that the Union scheme was to take from the Mother Country a large portion of the burthens with which she has been charged in reference to our defence. Among others whom I met, was a very