

The motions were subsequently withdrawn to allow the discussion to proceed.

REMARKS OF MR. BLACKWOOD.

Mr. BLACKWOOD said:—I think that no member should hesitate to give his opinions to the country on such an occasion as this, and I fear that the undue pressure brought to bear to force us to a division will have the effect of preventing some gentlemen from expressing their views. Occupying the position in which this Legislature is placed, I think that ample time should be given to every member to collect his thoughts and bring them to bear upon the discussion. The resolution before us I do not intend to support. I always believed in Responsible Government and the principle upon which that sort of Government rests—that the people shall be ruled according to their well understood wishes. A member who knows the views of his constituents on this question should be prepared to give his vote like a man; but a member not knowing those views, or knowing that a majority of those whom he represents are against the measure, is in duty bound to vote against the resolution which will take away their privileges without appeal. I feel it to be my duty to refrain from giving away the rights of the people without affording them an opportunity of expressing their opinions and judging for themselves. If the great intelligence possessed by the people of this country were brought to bear on this house to-night, it would be seen that they would not part with their rights without a struggle. Union may be a good thing, but I should like to be sure that we are going to gain some substantial advantages by it. I find in the speeches of those who advocate the scheme a great deal of mere theory. Looking at the matter as a surrender of some of our privileges, I think it behooves us to examine well before passing the resolution. I have yet expressed no opinion on the principle of Union, but I will now say to the house and to the country that I will assent to no scheme until the people have passed upon it. By the division to-night we may establish what will be called an union,—but will that be a union of the people? Give me a union of heart, and thought, and action—a union that will strengthen the arm and nerve the heart upon every occasion. The people, I maintain, are able to judge of the question for themselves, and if they choose Union, I will gladly assent, but if they reject the scheme, away goes the proposition. It may be said that this Legislature constitutes the united wisdom of the country; and, while I admit that a large amount of intelligence is to be seen around these benches, I feel that, in the locality which I represent, there are men from whom I should like to hear. As the hour is late, I will not further occupy the time of the house, and I will conclude by saying that this matter should be placed in the hands of the people.

SPEECH OF MR. ROSS.

Mr. Ross said:—At this hour of the night, or rather of the morning, I do not intend to say much on the question now before the house. As

remarked by my friend, Mr. Blackwood, the Provincial Secretary is driving us into a corner, when forcing us to a division when we should be in our beds. I have taken a large number of notes, and intended defining my position, if not to the satisfaction of the majority of this house, at least to a majority of the people of Nova Scotia, and particularly that of my own constituents. A singular but unholy union had taken place.—Even during the delegation to Quebec, a certain gentleman in the Legislative Council and the Provincial Secretary could scarcely find language strong enough to express the terms of abuse and reproach which the one applied to the other.—When they got those princely dinners,—those ovations, with abundance of good wine, they began to forget what was due to Nova Scotia and to the interests of the people. As long as these were opposed to each other the wrongs and injuries done to our people were well exposed; but now both support each other, without regard to the interests of Nova Scotia. We are told that we are on the eve of a great crisis, and it is true that some Fenians are organizing in the States, but they intend to restore to Ireland what we are about destroying in this Province, namely, our noble and glorious Constitution. The American people are now beginning to enjoy peace, and it will be the work of years to place their financial affairs on a sound and proper basis.—They desire peace, and both France and England will look with jealous eye on any extension of their power on this continent. France is interested in Mexico, and Great Britain in the North American Provinces, and both would unite to prevent further increase of territory to the States. This is the best guarantee for peace. In the event of war it is acknowledged by those sent out officially to report on our defences that Canada, with its long line of land and water boundary is our weak spot, and that it cannot be defended as well as Nova Scotia, which is almost surrounded by water. Here we have men who will defend us, and are willing to do so; but force us into a union with Canada, and you will create a feeling of disloyalty among our people, the extent of which it is painful to contemplate. Therefore, in the question of defence we gain weakness instead of strength. It is said that, with the present rate of consumption, coal will be soon scarce in Great Britain, and then Nova Scotia and Cape Breton would be the last places that would be abandoned. Mr. Archibald says that this house will remain. But take away from us the power of self-government, and you take away what we most dearly cherish. The Quebec scheme is largely copied from the constitution of New Zealand, and it is singular that the constitution of that country was published by Mr. McGee about the time that our delegates were giving away Nova Scotia to meet Canadian necessities. In New Zealand there are nine different Provinces, each having its own distinct local Government, and there they complain that they are expensive, without any benefits arising from the expenditure. In that country they are strongly advocating separation, and the whole