

Government of Quebec, would not only be unjust to the inhabitants of that Colony, but, grave disservice to their country and most essential rights and interests. And, by so doing, enjoying the blessings of a permanent Constitution, guaranteed to them by the Imperial Government of Great Britain; and, as respects the second Resolution, which declares that "we cannot admit that a Federal Union of the North American Provinces and Colonies, which would include Prince Edward Island, would be accomplished upon terms that would press advantages to the interests and well-being of the people of this Island,"—I am also prepared to vote for it, in its full integrity; although, should it be found possible so to modify it, without any abatement of the principle of Confederation set forth in the Report of the Quebec Conference—as to render it more acceptable to such non-members as may think it rather too strong in its present form,—to such a modification of it I shall certainly offer no opposition.

Mr. BROCKEN. Having, at length, in the House, last Session, and, subsequently, at public meetings, expressed his views concerning the projected Confederation of the British North American Provinces, he did not think it necessary that he should here enter into any thing like a full recapitulation of them. The Resolution submitted to the Committee were certainly very strong; the last, in his opinion was too strong. However it was to be remembered that in debating the question of Confederation, they were not debating a party question, nor one of only passing interest; but one, their determination of which would be of permanent and, advantageously or otherwise, the destiny of Prince Edward Island for generations to come. John Bull had always claimed, as one of his greatest privileges, the right to grumble, and to stand out, to the last moment, for whatever he thought himself fairly entitled to; and that privilege the people of this Colony had never been backward to claim and assert. The Quebec Confederation Scheme was, it was well known, favourably viewed by the Imperial Government, and, equally so, it was said, by Her Majesty the Queen; yet admitting all that—and he was disposed to dispute it; for he could see no impropriety in its being so regarded at Home—he did not think, as some did, that we could fairly be subject to the imputation of disloyalty because, so far as that Scheme was meant to apply to Prince Edward Island, he was adverse to it, and should express our aversion to it in the strongest language. He certainly did not, for our common, imagine that the Imperial Government would ever consent to sanction any Scheme of Confederation, by which it was obvious to them that the interests of even the smallest and most feeble of the Colonies would be sacrificed for the promotion of those of the largest and most powerful. The Imperial Government, even, doubtless, bent upon carrying out the Confederation Scheme; but, in their determination to give it effect, they contemplated nothing but the general good of all the Provinces which it was intended to embrace. They could conceive nothing but the restoration of the same unity, interests and progress of these Provinces and general facilities, as the natural consequences of our governments, independent of each other, our diverse laws, our different territories and hostile tariffs. This justly appeared to them as the most anomalous state of things. A group of Provinces, enjoying closely together, and all paying allegiance to the same Sovereign, would not, or at least ought not, it seemed to him, to have separate and conflicting interests; and, therefore, it was, seeing that all of them were rapidly approaching a state, the further extension of which would require that, as respected all the relations of trade, commerce, law, and government, they should, as it were, interwine with and lean

upon each other—that the Imperial Government, though the very thing which should be desired for them, was such a Union as would consolidate their growing strength, and give to all its interests, in a more stable and, the individual or possible resources and privileges of each. And, to that end, it had doubtless appeared to them that we should come to more happily framed than that of the Quebec Conference. In that opinion, however, at least as far as it respected Prince Edward Island, they were certainly in error; and what had especially led to their mistake, with respect to us, was their ignorance—for it could not be forgiveness of our peculiar position, resources, and trade. They did not comprehend our exceptional position. That they should be ignorant of that fact did not surprise him; for, as the British Trade Convention, he found several of the Delegates to that Convention, although co-operatively speaking, our near neighbours almost as regards respecting our resources and trade, as most of us were the people of Ohio and Japan. The Imperial Government thought that, if we went into the Confederation, our material interests would all receive an immediate and most sensible progressive impulse; and that, in fact, our prosperity would increase in every direction. As respected our representation in the Confederate House of Commons, small as the number was, which it was set down in the Report, on the basis of population, and decennial readjustments on that basis, at the expiration of the first ten years of the Union, our representation would be still further diminished. The allowance of £21,850, to be made to this Island, for consideration of the transfer of our revenue and of the powers of taxation to the General Parliament, was manifestly a very inadequate compensation for our relinquishment of our Revenue, now amounting to £70,000, and which, in a few years would, in all probability, amount to £100,000 per annum. That allowance would not suffice to defray our annual local expenditure; and, whenever it should be found necessary for us to undertake any large public work for our own local benefit, we would have to provide for the expense by extra direct local taxation. As respected the direct benefits which it was said by the advocates of Confederation, as regarded us, from the Canals and Railroads of the other Provinces, and towards the past and future cost of which we were to contribute, considering that we should be shut out from the use and advantage of them for five months of the year, it would be about just as reasonable to say that on account of the benefits which we might derive from the construction of public works in Kamtschatka, we should contribute towards the expense incurred by it.—His greatest objection to the Confederation Scheme was based on his dread of the enormous taxation to which we would, in all probability, be subjected by the construction of fortifications, the raising of a Confederate army and navy to afford protection against the annexation possibilities of Brother Jonathan, the deepening and widening of the Canals of Upper Canada, and the construction of other public works, which would be required as the country became more and more opened up and improved, would necessitate such an outlay of public money as could not be raised independently of extraordinary taxation; and to prevent either that, or to check any extravagance on the part of the General Government, the small share which we should have in parliamentary representation, would render us powerless. The hon. and learned member said he did not go quite so far as some anti-confederates; for he believed that, if the other Provinces went into the Union we should not be able to keep out. We were told that the British Government would not deprive us of a Constitution which they themselves had guaranteed to us. But we

ought to remember our great indebtedness to the British Government, and to take care that our obligations should not be the cause of some enlargement of feeling towards us on their part; and, unless we were to receive whatever we deem our rights, and unless we were to receive whatever we deem our undisturbance towards their part, the present situation. Some would say that it was a matter of course that the Union, no longer would be open to us, but that of annexation to the United States; but annexation to the United States would not be our fate, even if we desired it. The Imperial Government, ignorant as they might be concerning our trade and resources, knew too well the importance of the geographical position of Prince Edward Island—the key to the St. Lawrence—to allow us to annex ourselves to the United States. Some said it would be better for us, at first to go into Union as grumblers, than to be obliged to go in afterwards as beggars; there was nothing better said, but begging was positive degradation. That might all be very fine; but, he maintained, there would be nothing mean in going in by begging, even at the eleventh hour, if, by remaining out until then, we could obtain better terms. Then were offered to us by the Quebec Scheme. He said, with the hon. member for the Third District of Prince County, (Mr. Sinclair), that to give us better terms was not impossible; but he believed that Canada would never, of herself, be willing to give us better terms. His (Mr. Brocken's) opinion then was that our best policy would be to keep out until Canada, in her eagerness to include us in the Union, should offer to treat with us on fairer terms; and then, should we find that we were suffering by keeping out, self-interest might induce us to accept the best terms we could get. The second Resolution, he said again, was too strong. To say that no terms of Union that would prove advantageous to our interests and well-being as a people, could be offered, was certainly saying too much and going too far; but, when he took into consideration the object to be attained by so working the Resolution, which was the rendering it impossible for the Government to consent to the appointment of delegates to the projected London Convention—a course which, if adopted, would in all probability result in a repetition of the Quebec agreement—he was quite prepared to vote for it, so strong was, in his private face sense, he thought it. If Delegates were appointed, by our Government, to attend the London Convention, even for the purpose of opposing the Quebec Scheme, and endeavouring to procure a modification of it for our benefit, he feared they might, as at Quebec, be won over to the opinions of the Canadian and Nova Scotia Delegates in favor of it. Still he would like that Resolution to be remodelled, if that could be done without an acknowledgment of the principle of a Union on the Quebec basis, for, as it stood, a position was assumed in it, from which possibly we might hereafter have to recede. It was the duty of the House, however, to speak out clearly, plainly, and without ambiguity.

Hon. Mr. McEACHEN. He was happy to be able to endorse the Resolutions exactly as they had been submitted by the Hon. the Leader of the Government. They were strong; but not too strong. He agreed with the hon. member (Mr. Sinclair and Mr. Brocken) that were we to admit the principle set forth in the Quebec Report, that was the possibility of its being made just to Prince Edward Island, we would be drawn into it. If we allowed the small size of the bridge to be insisted, it would soon be driving through. He was glad to hear the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown (Mr. Brocken) allude to the right claimed by John Bull to grumble and to be stubborn when

called upon, to resign any thing which he believed himself entitled to hold; and it was the hon. member then based thereon an argument for the people of this Island, that John Bull, stubborn in the retention of West-India Colonies, such stubbornness would certainly begeth him, yet people; but although he would not deny that John Bull had been a hereditary right to assert that privilege yet yet, would say it became them not—the descendants of the men who were conquered by the Normans and who fought the battle of Hastings—as well as it did the descendants of those men whose ancestors—the "Caledonians" of old—fled back from their mountain fastnesses of liberty the conquering eagles of Imperial Rome. He (Hon. Mr. McEACHEN) was a descendant of those unconquered heroes of the North; and he would never consent to be abasing our right to preserve our free constitution, with all its rights, privileges, and immunities, we should adopt the cowardly, origing tone in which it suited venality and corruption to plead for the attainment of the objects of their selfish design. There was no reason to fear that we should be drawn into the project of Confederation. The people of Prince Edward Island had a Constitution as well as Canada; and, if they did their duty, they would never lose it. Mr. Cardwell would, no doubt, be glad if he found us willing to agree to go into the Union on the terms of the Quebec Scheme; but, if he found we were not willing, he would not dare to force us. If once, like the Hungarians and the Poles, we should be deprived of our Constitution, we would never be able to regain it. He would, therefore, support the Resolutions, both in the spirit and the letter. They were certainly strong; but they were not too strong for him. We knew, said the hon. gentleman in conclusion, what we enjoy under our present free Constitution; but we know not what we should have to endure, were we, by a Union with Canada, on the terms of the Quebec Scheme of Confederation, to be deprived of it.

Hon. Mr. HENSLERY. As to the first Resolution, which went to confirm the decision of the House, in its last session, upon the question of a Union of the British North American Colonies, to the effect—that any Union of those Colonies which should embrace Prince Edward Island, upon the terms and principles set forth in the Quebec Conference, would not only be unjust to the inhabitants of this Colony, but prove disastrous to their dearest and most cherished rights and interests as a free people, enjoying the blessings of a priceless Constitution guaranteed to them by the Imperial Government of Great Britain,—having been so fully and so strongly affirmed, he was not necessary, perhaps, for him to say more than that he still firmly adhered to the opinion then expressed by him of its propriety. And neither did it appear to him to be necessary that he should, in his opposition to the Quebec Scheme, relate the arguments which, whilst speaking upon the first Resolution, had been so ably brought to bear against that Scheme by the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown (Mr. Brocken) with every word of which he agreed. He would, therefore, proceed to give his views touching the propriety of the second Resolution, which declared that the House could not admit that a Federal Union of the North American Provinces and Colonies, which would include Prince Edward Island, could ever be accomplished upon terms that would prove advantageous to the interests and well-being of the people of this Island. He looked upon the declaration of that Resolution in such the same light in which it had been viewed by the hon. member for the Third District of Prince County (Mr. Sinclair) and the hon. and learned member for the Se-