

which they purpose to adopt; but I consider that it is their duty to submit the proposed amendments to the House, and then to let the honorable body decide with them on their merits. (Laughter.) The amendments are suggested with grave respect to the account of the conduct of the House Government, and it is not necessary to deal with it in a practical manner. It is difficult to say what is desirable from the Secretary of State for the Colonies may be laid before us in the course of a month. There are some hon. members here, however, who feel greater political anxiety than I do; and so, what will probably enlighten this House on the best course to pursue in the case. There may be facts connected with it submitted to our notice of which we are at present unprovided; and it is impossible to determine what steps it may be expedient to take. If I mistake not, the Exchequer stated in his speech that this paper on the subject will be laid before the House. It will be time enough then to judge of the matter. As chairman of the delegation I had my own share of the work to perform, and I should desire to be called upon to enter into explanations of the questions brought up in proper shape. With reference to the appointment to which the hon. leader of the Opposition objects, I will refrain from making any observations at present, for it would perhaps necessitate a reference to another gentleman to whom I do not now wish to allude. I dare say the Government were satisfied by the best possible motives in making the selection which they did. It is no easy matter, as I can testify from my experience during the last two years, to procure suitable candidates. I suppose the Government would scarcely have ventured to offer the appointment to the hon. member for East Point, with any hope of receiving a favorable reply. (Laughter.) I regard the hon. gentleman who has been appointed as a very well qualified for the situation he has been called upon to fill. I look upon him, Sir, as the father of this House—but in making this remark I am not certain that I am doing justice to the hon. member for Cardigan.

Hon Mr COLES.—Nor to one or two others on this side of the House.

Hon Col GRAY.—Well, I am right in saying that he has been longer a member than any of the Government side of the House. We are all here, I believe, comparatively young members (Laughter.) I am safe in saying, however, that the gentleman appointed is one well entitled to the confidence of the country. I am not aware, at least, that the Government could have done better in the selection.

Hon Mr COLES.—I did not censure the Government for appointing delegates, but for saying that they are opposed to Confederation, and at the same time appointing a Unionist to a seat in the Executive.

Hon Mr DAVIES.—It is difficult to tell who is, and who is not a Unionist in this House. The hon. member who last spoke has, I understand, expressed himself in favor of a Union of the Colonies. At Ottawa he certainly made a speech approving of the terms of the Quebec Conference. As this is a question on which the people have not made up their minds I do not see how the Government could be expected to lay down any definite policy to the matter. The hon. member for Belfast has set the case very fairly before the Committee, by stating that the time to discuss the question is when the Report of the delegates and the papers connected therewith have been presented to the House.

Hon Mr COLES.—I cannot allow the statement of the hon. member for Charlottetown to pass uncontradicted. I defy him or any other person to show that I, in the Conference or any where else, said that I was in favor of the terms contained in the Report of the delegates. All I said at Ottawa in favor of the Report was, that it was creditable to so many men that they had agreed so well in drawing it up. Hon. members may say that this is not a Government question; but I am determined to make it one, so that if it be taken the polls the people may have the matter fairly before them. Some may be disposed to say that the terms are not very favorable to this Colony, but they have confidence that the gentlemen at Ottawa will do what is fair. Now, I am of opinion that the people of this Island would not be satisfied to leave the matter in this way. To have hon. members acting like loose fish on such a question is dangerous. Had I been desirous to carry my resolution I would have put it in a different shape altogether. I do not wish them to vote against their declared principles. I believe the hon. member on my right (hon Mr Whelan) and the late leader of the Govern-

ment would vote to have the Report of the delegates confirmed by the Imperial Government. (There are some old party leaders and as mentioned formerly in The Land Question.) I am not certain, as it is not so far from the fact, that the Hon. member for Belfast, the first time, the first time, which it has been admitted for years, would, perhaps, have admitted the Government had they declared their principles. As it is at present, I do not understand their policy. (Laughter.)

Mr BRIDGES.—I had hoped, Mr Chairman, that this question would have been met in the spirit of the spirit of the motives of politicians mentioned by the hon. member for Belfast—that of the general interests of the country—but, Sir, I now despair of that, seeing that the hon. leader of the Opposition has expressed his determination to degrade this high theme to the level of a mere party question. Never since this Island had a Legislature, never since the sun of civilization shone upon it, has a matter of such momentous interest, wherein such great principles are involved, occupied the attention of its parliament. The hon. leader of the Opposition has talked much about timing wails to catch the varying breeze of popular favor; but I can tell him that example is better than precept. No one should regard a question of such magnitude in the light of his own personal interests or those of his party. Generations yet unborn are to be affected by the decision of this matter, and it is truly to be regretted that the hon. member has not thought fit to follow the example adopted by the Legislatures of the other Colonies, where party spirit has been merged in the treatment of this subject. In Canada we had gentlemen who had long been bitter opponents now greeting us as we sit—told their lives and the lands shall do. In Nova Scotia the leaders of the Government and the Opposition in the Legislature Council, and in the Assembly the ex-Attorney General, were this subject only as it regards the general interests of their country. Such examples should not be without effect on the hon. member. My own opinion is, that in the contemplated Union, as I believe that it is, it will not be an advantage to the Colonies, and it is not a question for this is not the time to discuss the question, for every hon. member forms opinions on the matter, and the information embodied in the correspondence shall be placed before them. I have not sought to know the course the Government may adopt on this question, but it is no imputation on their conduct that they have not indicated their action in the address. I think it would be more proper to await the action of the other Colonies. I see by the debates in the Canadian Legislature that the Report of the Conference is regarded as a treaty. Perhaps that report may have been assented to by the hon. member himself. There may possibly be another Conference; if such should be the case and the hon. member should assist at it, I hope he will occupy a more comfortable position than I fear he does at present. As one of the seven representatives of this Island, he occupied at the Quebec Conference a high position, and he had a high and solemn duty to perform, and he should have discharged it untrammelled by considerations of mere party. If he was opposed to the Scheme, then was the time for him to have manifested his independence, and if he considered that the project would operate prejudicially to the interests of his country, he should have stated so. Sir, he should have recollected that it devolved upon him as a prominent public man of the Island, delegated to the mission on which he went, on account of his position, to have asserted and illustrated the reputation of his country for straightforward honest conduct. If our Island home be limited in area, if its population be sparse and its people poor in comparison to our neighbors, these circumstances rendered more incumbent on those who represented us to show that we were disposed to act without duplicity, and not in subject the Colony to the imputation of a breach of faith with our neighbors. As to what has been said by the hon. member with reference to the appointment of the Solicitor General it becomes not me, situated as I am, with reference to that gentleman, to discuss the subject as fully and freely as I might under other circumstances; but I do say that the constituency of Georgetown which he has for years represented, and from whom he seeks a renewed expression of confidence, is, although comparatively small, as intelligent as any in the Island. They have had ample opportunities of estimating his character for veracity, and when he openly avows his opinions in seeking their suffrages, they are best qualified to know what amount of credence is to be accorded to him. The hon. leader of the Opposition finds that, the Land Question having been finally disposed of, no locus standi is left for him, and consequently he must lower the question of