Hon. Solicitor GENERAL.—Mr Speaker, I shall not shrink from the free expression of my opinion on this great question, because I happen unfortunately to be one of a minority of one. This is the most momentous subject ever submitted to the consideration of any of the Colonial Legislatures of British North America, and its importance is evinced by the fact that it has afforded the first example in the annals of this, or I believe any other Colonial Assembly, of the discussion being carried on with the Speaker in the Chair, thus restraining members from the freedom that a debate in Committee would allow them. I am aware that many hon members, on both sides of the House, are of the opinion that this should be not a Government question, but I differ from them. Leaders of the Governments and Oppositions in the other Colonies united in the adoption of the Report. Nova Scotia treated it as an open question, and it is in that position here. When the proposal of a Legislative Union was proposed, I was strongly opposed to it, and I am of the same opinion still. There is a vital difference between a Legislative Union of the Maritime Provinces and a Federal Union of all the North American Colonies. We would be bound in all our local affairs by the action of a Parliament constituted under a Legislative Union, while a Federal connection leaves to us the undivided control of all subjects of legislation peculiar to our circumstances. At the Conference held at Quebec, at which were represented Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, the vote was taken on the details of the proposed Union, not by the suffrage of individual members of the Conference, but by each of the Colonies represented. Therefore the resolution that the Report was adopted, Sir, of the Canadians is untrue; it was adopted by all the Colonies who had sent their delegates to take part in the deliberations, and, consequently, the Maritime Provinces had a majority against Upper and Lower Canada of four to two. It is unfair to them to object to the Report as having been got up by the Canadians for their own purposes. Whether the Report meets popular favor or not, the delegates from the Lower Provinces had the power to defeat it, had they been opposed to it. Well, Sir, the very first paragraph in the Report passed unanimously, and its passage was greeted with three cheers. That paragraph reads as follows:—

"The best interests and present and future prosperity of British North America will be promoted by a Federal Union under the Crown of Great Britain, provided such Union can be effected on principles just to the several Provinces."

I am truly surprised that any gentleman, who being present as a delegate, voted for that paragraph, which affirms the principle of Union, can be found now to oppose it. It has been said, Mr Speaker, that a fixed look at the nations of political parties in these Provinces; had, the principle of a political Union of British North America did not see the light for the first time in the year 1864. The correspondence between the late Duke of Kent and the late Judge Sewell shows that the idea occupied the minds of men in high station many years ago. In that mine of political information, the Report of the late Lord Durham, the opinion is expressed that Union among themselves can alone preserve these Colonies from absorption into the neighboring republic. Those facts show that the idea is not peculiar to the Provinces. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick several of their leading public men have advanced similar opinions. At the time of the Union between Upper and Lower Canada, the former Province obtained an equal share of representation in the United Parliament. With Lower Canada, although the population of Upper Canada was less than that of Lower Canada, they each sent an equal number of representatives—65. But the influx of immigration into Upper Canada has so far changed her position to the Lower Province, that the former provides two-thirds of the revenue, the share of which appropriated to her is in the inverse ratio to the amount which she contributes. When the Hon George Brown's party came into power, the idea was broached of dissolving the Union with Lower Canada, and having a general Confederation. When the opportunity offered by the Conference of the delegates of the Maritime Provinces, Canada thought it a favorable occasion to send delegates to listen to the views of the leading men of the Lower Colonies, and I may say that in this instance Canada's difficulty is our opportunity. But, Mr Speaker, in whatever motives the idea of the Confederation may have had its origin, the result of the defeat of the project will be, I have no hesitation in saying, her absorption into the United States. Already the handwriting is on the wall, and it needs no prophet to expound its meaning that Union or Republication awaits us. A great outcry has been raised on the subject of the terms and tenures which we would have to accept if we joined the other Colonies; but no hon member has yet shown us how much our situation in that respect would be improved by refusing to pay the far higher taxes if we should form part of the United States. I have, the financial difficulties of the Maritime Provinces, and shall adopt the same argument. I shall maintain, Mr Speaker, that the pages of history may be ransacked in vain for the record of any people who are now to a position among the nations of the earth whose minds were not imbued with that sentiment, and that Colonies, or states, who have sprung from their once high position dates from the time they began to lose its influence. Without that element in her national character where would Great Britain have been to her gigantic struggle with Napoleon the First? The hot, manly speech of Earl Pole (Mr Hendey) says that we would be taxed for the construction of the Intercolonial Railroad, and that we would receive no benefit in return for our expenditure. Under any circumstances we would receive indirect benefit, but I contend that the preservation of monarchical principles to us would be a direct boon, and the promised military aid of the Mother Country by her troops which that railway could transport in the winter season from Halifax to the frontier of Upper Canada, would be no inconsiderable, for, as it has been truly said, if Canada falls we must all share her fate. In addition we would have the protection of her navy on our coasts as long as the navigation continued open. In the convention at Quebec, it was agreed by myself and others that the representation of the Upper House, or Senate, as regards the number of members from each State, should be applied to the Upper House of the Confederate Legislature. The proposal was overruled, and since that time I have begun to think the decision was right. The Confederate adopted a middle course between the two extremes, and if Newfoundland shall come into the scheme the Maritime Provinces will receive four additional members. The principle of representation by population is the lower branch is the equity. It was recommended by the late Lord Durham as far back as 1837. The duty of arranging the electoral districts for the first election is to be left to the respective local Governments. The Conference merely apportions the number of representatives to the different Colonies. The hon member for the city (Mr Brecken) said that it would be time to consider our situation when our position as a British Colony shall be involved. His labors under a mistake; the present is the proper time. The crisis will soon arrive, and the time is at hand when we must assume our full share of our burdens. Let the old adage be remembered that those who aid themselves the gods will aid. I am aware of the great satisfaction experienced by the opponents of Confederation at the result of the general election in New Brunswick; but the news, Union or no Union was not fairly submitted to the people. Personal antipathies had much to do in bringing about the result. Parties took sides on the principle of the old ditch—

I do not like thee, Doctor Tall,
The reason why, I cannot tell.

As to Nova Scotia, any action on her part would have been premature before the result of the New Brunswick elections had been ascertained. Sir, I believe that the sun will yet rise upon a Confederation of those Colonies, notwithstanding the jubilant feelings of the opponents of that great measure at its temporary failure. Thirty-three representatives of the six North American Colonies were united on the question last year, and now several of them, strange to say, oppose it. The Report, in my opinion, embodies the best features of the constitutions of Great Britain and of the United States, applicable to our circumstances; and it is no small satisfaction to those who support the measure of a Union, that though it may meet opposition in the Colonies, it has received a approval from the statesmen and press of the mother country. The benefit which would accrue from Union would be the diversion of the tide of immigration from the United States to these Colonies, where the civil and religious liberties would be secured to the stranger the moment he landed on our shores. Mr Speaker, I may say that the Report of the delegates embodies principles greater in some respects than those on which the Constitution of the United States is based. The chief ruler of that country is, himself, during his term of office, irresponsible to the people, and is surrounded by a minister equally unfettered. The Constitution of the proposed Union acknowledges only one sovereign Queen and her successors as the chief authority, and the administration of the Confederate Colonies will be conducted by

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