

whether I shall vote for or against this Union when the question comes up; but I am glad to see a movement taking place in this direction, but I think there need not be much expense attending this delegation, for the distance being short, the Nova Scotia delegation may come over to St. John. The members of the House can vote for this resolution without being obliged to vote for any union the delegation might propose. Some gentlemen say if they cannot have a large union they do not want a small one; but I think this small union may be a benefit, while it might not be desirable to have a union of all the British possessions in the world. The appointment of this delegation may be the means of bringing about a commercial union, which would be a benefit to these Maritime Provinces.

Col. BOYD.—It is very desirable to have a union of these Maritime Provinces, either commercial or legislative. I would rather see a Legislative Union, because one Legislature would answer in place of three. If the gentlemen who were appointed last year to confer on this subject had done their duty, we might have been united now. It is very desirable that we should have one tariff, one currency, and the same postal arrangements in the three Provinces. After we have this union, and it is found to work well, we might have Confederation with Canada, if the Canadians would make reasonable propositions; but at present we should creep before we walk.

Mr. McMILLAN.—I think in courtesy to Nova Scotia, we should not object to passing this resolution; but I do not see any benefits arising from this small union, which would not have been much greater in the larger union. This small union was abandoned last year, but I do not think it was abandoned until the delegation was satisfied that it could not be carried out.

Mr. FRASER.—I do not think this is a proper time to discuss this matter, as we are voting for this resolution as a matter of courtesy.

Mr. GILBERT.—The interests of these Lower Provinces are identified in every possible way, and this delegation may lead to some beneficial results. I cannot see how the Government could well get clear of co-operating with Nova Scotia in discussing this matter. I shall support the resolution.

Mr. HILL.—It is said this resolution is a mere matter of courtesy to Nova Scotia. I do not see that it is any more so than a similar resolution which we passed last year, the result of which certainly went beyond what we intended when we passed that resolution. It would be premature to take sides on this question now, inasmuch as our minds would be liable to change when we receive further information on the subject. Although I am somewhat in favor of this resolution, thinking this union will come to pass in a few years, yet I should like to hear the arguments for and against it, in order to acquire further information. When the Canadian union was first mooted, I was rather in favor of it; but the more I looked into it the more I opposed it. There is no subject which can come before the Legislature this Session that I would more gladly listen to than a union of these Lower Colonies. Some such preliminary discussion should take place, in order that we may be fully prepared to discuss the question when it comes up.

Mr. KERR.—I am in favor of this resolution, because by negotiating with the Lower Colonies we have already been

benefitted to a considerable extent. I recollect the time when there was a duty of two pounds on every horse that was imported from Prince Edward Island; but by an arrangement entered into by the Governments of the respective Provinces, the productions of the different Colonies are entered at a uniform rate. I imported a carriage from the United States and paid 17½ per cent. duty in this Province. If I had taken it to Nova Scotia I would have had to have paid but 6 per cent., and could have brought it home from there just as easily, and thereby escaped the extra duty. Merchants like to get their goods into the country at the lowest possible rate, and it is very desirable that such an arrangement may be made as will remove all the restrictions upon our trade, so that the importations into the various Colonies may be admitted at the same rate of duty. The heads of departments should meet and discuss this matter of a Legislative or Commercial Union, and the resolution which they adopt can be feily discussed in the House next winter.

Mr. CONNELL moved that this resolution be postponed for three months, and said:—If this resolution is a mere matter of courtesy, and no result to be arrived at, what is the use of appointing a delegation? It is a matter which can be very well undertaken by the Government, and it is very right for them to do so, having such information as they receive before the Legislature next winter. It has been said that we would have been swamped in uniting with Canada; but the same argument will apply to a union of these Lower Colonies. I should like to have seen the President of the Council go into an elaborate discussion of this matter, as they have done in Nova Scotia, not only in reference to a union of the Lower Colonies, but also the larger union with Canada. I should like the opinion of the country to be expressed on this question, as it might have an influence upon this delegation. If there is no movement made to discuss this question, how is the country to get information? No action should be taken until the country has had an opportunity to express an opinion upon the subject. In reference to Confederation, I always expressed my opinion in the strongest terms, that the measure should never be submitted to the House for its final passage without being first left to the people.

Hon. Mr. SMITH.—We might have a dissolution of the House upon the question.

Mr. CONNELL.—I should like to see it. With reference to Confederation it was a great mistake that the matter had not been brought before the Legislature and discussed, just as this matter should be discussed before a delegation is appointed to go to Nova Scotia. If that had been the case the people would have been misled the way they have been on this question of Confederation, and would have arrived at a different result, for I believe a large majority of the country are in favor of Confederation. I do not see any advantage to be derived from this connection with Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, but think it would be decidedly injurious so far as Agriculture is concerned. I think it would be great injustice to the people of this Province to have the Seat of Government removed to Halifax, for it is there where it would have to go. I suppose the President of the Council thinks it will go to Dorchester, but he may rest assured that it will not, for we will have but a small minority in the House,

and consequently cannot locate the Seat of Government where we choose.

Dr. THOMPSON.—There is no basis upon which to rest a discussion. If the delegates agree upon anything before the next Session, that will be the time to discuss it. We will have one Legislature instead of three if we adopt this Union, and consequently can reduce our number of representatives from each County, or form electoral districts. There will be an advantage in uniting the seaboard Provinces where the trade is all of the same kind, whereas if we united in Canada we would have nothing in common, for we could take nothing to them, and receive nothing from them except provisions. This delegation may suggest something in regard to trade that will be an advantage, but it will be time enough to discuss the subject when their report is brought before us.

The House decided in favor of the resolution.

On motion of Hon. Mr. SMITH, the House went into a Committee of the whole to take into consideration

A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT OF DEBENTURES ISSUED UNDER AN ACT RELATING TO THE SAVINGS' BANK AND OTHER PROVINCIAL LIABILITIES.

Mr. COSTIGAN in the Chair.

Hon. Mr. SMITH.—In 1866 the Legislature passed a law authorizing the Governor in Council to issue debentures to the amount of \$90,000. In 1862 an Act was passed enlarging the grant to \$500,000, and the late Government have issued debentures to that extent; but \$30,000 sterling of those debentures remain in the hands of the Messrs. Baring in London; the object of which was to meet any call upon Savings' Bank deposits. The time of those debentures was limited to ten years, that time expires next May. The object of this Bill is to provide for the issue of debentures to the extent of \$500,000, to meet those debentures when they fall due. In this Bill I have given a discretionary power to the Government, having put in no limitation as to time; we can pay at cash, whether in sterling or currency, as may seem most advantageous to the public interest.

Mr. KERR.—There are now already debentures to the extent of \$30,000 sterling in the hands of the Messrs. Baring, lying unsold, which were issued under the Act providing for the issue of \$500,000. Before these new debentures are issued, there should be some provision made to satisfy the country that these debentures lying in the Messrs. Baring's hands would be destroyed, so that the amount would not be charged against the Province with the amount authorized to be issued. We are all aware that the Bank of England always destroy their notes when received, and never issue them a second time. In Nova Scotia also, the Provincial notes are destroyed in the presence of a Joint Committee of the Legislature. A section should be added to this Bill providing for them to be destroyed, and stating in whose presence it should be done.

Hon. Mr. SMITH.—I do not see any necessity for an amendment of that kind, for these debentures are to be withdrawn, and the Government will see them destroyed; if they are withdrawn, it is just the same as if they were never issued, for they cannot be sold after they are over-due.

Mr. KERR.—I entirely differ from my hon. friend. It may be that after they are due they are not saleable, but they might be transferred from hand to hand.