

concerned, I need hardly tell the house that from the first hour I felt it necessary as a public man to give my earnest consideration to public matters—from the first hour I felt it due to the people, the management of whose affairs I had undertaken, to express my opinion on public questions—I have never hesitated openly, at all times and everywhere, to avow my deep and settled conviction that in a union of British North America lay the only great future for any portion of these provinces. True to these principles, whether in power or in opposition, to the best of my ability I advocated and sustained these views.—I pledged myself to my countrymen, at all times and under all circumstances, that whatever power and influence they might place in my hands, I would feel bound to use for the purpose of advancing the interests, elevating the character and promoting the security of our common country, by a union of British North America. Believing as I do that not only the most marked prosperity would have followed, but that the only security and guarantee for the continued possession of British principles in any portion of British North America, was involved in that great question, I have never hesitated to declare my opinion that it would have been wise on the part of Nova Scotia to have entered into that union under the terms propounded by the Quebec scheme.—There were many gentlemen around me, however—many for whom I entertain great respect—who felt that better terms should be obtained for the Maritime Provinces than were contained in that scheme. To-day I stand in the proud position of being able to claim confidently the support of gentlemen who were unable to give it to me before because whilst their general principles were in favour of Union they did not consider that the scheme of Union devised at Quebec gave to these provinces all the advantages and consideration to which they are entitled. The position, therefore, that we occupy on this question is one of no little pride for we are able to say that we have not only obtained everything which was granted at Quebec, but that very important concessions have been made in the arrangements that are now being consummated, and that all these alterations are most favorable to the interests of these Maritime Provinces. The narrow range taken by those gentlemen who have opened up this question precludes me from dwelling on this particular feature of it, but an occasion will offer itself later for discussing the scheme in all its bearings. Then gentlemen in this house will have ample opportunity to place before the legislature and country an expression of their opinion on this great question. It will be therefore only necessary that I should briefly call the attention of the house to the position that this question now assumes, and deal with the constitutional point which has been raised by gentlemen on the opposite side.

I need not remind the House that no man can pretend that this is one of the occasions on which a great surprise is attempted. No man can contend that this question of a Union of

British North America is not one to which the public mind and consideration of all classes of the intelligent people of this country have not been again and again turned, until it has become perfectly familiar to all. I need not go into any lengthy review of circumstances that took place on this question, but twenty-five years ago the whole subject, in all its bearings, was placed in the report of Lord Durham before the people of British America and of the whole British Empire, and attracted an amount of attention that few other great public measures ever received. We might claim the proud distinction that this question has been examined and discussed within these walls with an acumen and ability that did the greatest honor to gentlemen on both sides. If there was a section of British America ready to come to the consideration of this question and pass upon it intelligently, it was the Province of Nova Scotia, familiarized as the people have been with it in all its aspects. So far as I am personally concerned I have never hesitated to express my sentiments whether as a member of the Government or Opposition. When opposed to the administration of the day in 1860 I was invited to deliver a lecture at the Mechanics' Institute of St. John, and I was permitted the privilege of choosing the subject upon which I would address them. I took that occasion to proclaim not only to the people of my own province but of British North America, that all the power and influence that I might ever obtain should be exerted to accomplish and consummate the great scheme of British American Union which had been so ably discussed in previous days. I returned from the neighbouring province, and what was the first thing that met me? Some gentlemen opposite who perhaps felt that the eulogiums which that address had received might make me a little giddy, immediately declared that after all there was nothing novel in these sentiments, that they were borrowed from my political opponents, and that the gentleman then at their head, Mr Howe, was one of the originators—as I have never denied he was—of this great scheme of Union. I felt there was no originality in my views, that all I had endeavored to do was to give favor and substance to the question—to pledge myself as a public man, devoted to the service of the country, to promote the consummation of this great scheme. I came back to this city, and at one of the largest assemblages that I have ever addressed, I repeated these sentiments and pledged myself, in the face of my country, that, if entrusted with power by the people of this Province, I would use that power as energetically as I was able for the accomplishment of this great project. I went up, then, into the neighbouring counties of Hants and Kings, and Colchester, and there proclaimed plainly to the people of this country my sentiments on the same great question; I did so by public invitation, and delivered these sentiments amid the united plaudits of men of all shades of politics. Everywhere I was proud to find that