

favour of a Federal Union of these Provinces, with a general Legislature to deal with the general interests, and Local Legislatures for the management of local affairs—in fact just such a scheme as we have proposed.

But the point with which I am now specially dealing is the constitutional question. I shall now give you Mr. Howe's views on this subject. When he obtained the unanimous permission of the Legislature to deal with the question of the Union of the Colonies, he addressed a letter to all the Governments of British North America, calling their attention to the advisability of holding a Conference in connection with the question. He said:—

"You will perceive that the Colonial Governments are left free to invite all the leading men of all the Provinces concerned, to a discussion of the question of Union, either of all the Provinces, or the Maritime Provinces only; and Her Majesty's Government, it would appear, are disposed to give due weight and consideration to any resolutions to which the Colonial Legislatures may concur.

"It must be obvious that there can be no great progress made towards an adjustment of this question unless the resolutions to be submitted to the Colonial Legislatures are in substance the same, and in order that uniformity in spirit, and, if possible, in language may be secured.

Here you have from Mr. Howe himself the mode proposed to give effect to the resolution which he in the commencement of his course, as first Minister of the Crown, brought forward for a Union of the Colonies. Not a word escaped from Mr. Young, Mr. Johnston, or any one else, that it was necessary to appeal to the people, in order to effect this important constitutional change:—

Mr. Young said: "It will be apparent. Mr. Chairman, from these views, that while I am favorable to an union of these colonies, and keenly alive to the benefits that may be expected to flow from it, I am also of opinion that we are not prepared to pass any resolution that should bind us at the present moment. Till we can at all events decide whether the union we desire shall be federal or legislative; it is wiser for us to say nothing. That cardinal point being once agreed on by the colonies, the details must be settled by a convention of the ablest and most experienced men. Their report would come back to the respective Legislatures for revision or confirmation; and in place of a precipitate movement, a movement might be sanctioned by general consent, after a deliberate and calm review and given to British America, under the old flag and surrounded and endeared by the old associations, a government formed on the most approved model, which republicans might envy and a free people would venerate and defend."

So you have the three prominent men of the day committing themselves in the most unequivocal manner to the declaration that under the constitution of the country the mode of dealing with this question was a Convention of public men, and that the scheme should have effect given to it by the people's representatives assembled in Parliament, when Lord Mulgrave, at Mr. Howe's solicitation, addressed a letter to the Colonial Office. His Grace the Duke of Newcastle gave his opinion on this point, as follows:—

"I should see no objection to any consultation on the subject amongst the leading members of the Government concerned; but whatever the result of such consultation might be the most satisfactory mode of testing the opinion of the people of British North America would probably be by means of a resolution or address proposed in the Legislature of each Province by its own Government."

To this may be added the following opinion of the present Colonial Minister. He says:—

"Her Majesty's Government anticipate no serious difficulty in this part of the case, since the Resolutions will generally be found sufficiently explicit to guide those who will be entrusted with the preparation of the Bill. It appears to them therefore that you should now take immediate measures in concert with the Lieutenant Governors of the several Provinces, for submitting to the respective Legislatures this project of the Conference; and if, as I hope, you are able to report that these Legislatures sanction and adopt the scheme, Her Majesty's Government will render you all the assistance in their power to carry it into effect."

So, at a time when the question was calmly debated, and when there was no excitement, you have these distinct utterances of all these able statesmen, both British and Colonial, that the Parliament of the country has power to change the constitution of the country, and that that is the proper mode of dealing with such a subject. Therefore I say that I am in a position to state that the Legislature is justified in taking such action upon the vital and important question, as in their deliberative opinion is calculated to promote the best interests of the Province and of British North America. It will thus be seen that the issue that has been raised by parties for purposes of their own—who wish to overthrow the existing administration and come into power themselves, is swept away like chaff before the wind; neither constitutional principle nor precedent being found to support their views.

After having sustained my position by arguments like these—after having brought the opinions of all these eminent public men to prove the proper and constitutional mode of dealing with the subject—after having shown that in the whole history of Great Britain and of the United States no parallel can be found for the appeal to the people which has been proposed—I think the opponents of Union are not in a situation to challenge the right of this house in the exercise of its legitimate functions to pursue such a course as the interest of our common country demands. They cannot find one example of a question like this being referred to the people at the polls, either in Great Britain or the United States,—there is one, but it is not one which they are likely to adduce for adoption by a British Assembly. It is the occasion on which the people of France were driven at the point of the bayonet to the polls, to sustain a perfect despotism in the country, to part with every vestige of liberty that freemen value.

Having already stated in detail the arguments in favor of Union which weigh upon my own mind, I feel I would be trespassing upon the House if I were, on the present occasion, to go as any length into a question which has been so fully discussed. I feel that when I have drawn the attention of the House to the fact that not only have gentlemen politically opposed to each other been brought to co-operate on this question, but the greatest mind of the country who have ever taken a prominent share in public affairs are endorsing this action, it is unnecessary for me to weary the House with any lengthy observations. I am not surprised that Mr. Howe should have