

we would be in a better or stronger position if we disturbed our institutions. While union, if not formed in opposition to the wishes of the people would be strength, a union so forced upon them would be weakness. I hope to see the day when all these colonies will be united, and I am hardly prepared to go the length of some who propose to wait until another general election,—we can understand the opinions of our constituents without waiting for that, and it is to be feared that other matters would be brought in on such an occasion. I will not longer detain the house, and I can assure you that when the people are prepared for union I will not be found an obstacle in the way believing that a majority of them are at present opposed to the measure; I cannot be a party to an act which will sweep away their rights.

Don. FIN. SECY. explained to the house that in parting with Mr. LeVesconte, who was abroad upon public service, he had promised that gentleman to pair off with him in case the question of Confederation was brought forward. He had no reason to believe that Mr. L. would be opposed to the resolution before the house, but lest it might be supposed that he had broken faith, he would refrain from voting on the division.

#### SPEECH OF MR. LAWRENCE.

Mr. LAWRENCE said:—I rise to make a few remarks on the question before the House, in discharge of the duty I owe to my constituents, and also to the country at large. I feel some reluctance in addressing the House at this late period of the session, but the profound anxiety with which I regard the feeling of the people impels me to speak. Standing as I do the representative of a free and intelligent people, honored with their confidence, anxious to discharge faithfully the trust reposed in me, I feel it is my duty to express my sentiments freely on the present occasion. There can be no great love for union where the parties to be joined have not the slightest desire to associate with each other,—right or wrong, beneficial or otherwise, it is impossible to persuade the mass of the people that the system which gives to them an equal voice in the government of the country is not the best. How many of the present members would be here, if they said to the people in 1863, that they were going to change the constitution of the country? All great questions ought to be examined with caution. Party considerations should sink, and as to the spirit with which I enter into this debate, I claim nothing more than to know what course is best to secure harmony and loyalty in our country. Neither the smiles of friends nor the frowns of foes, no political thunder either on the right hand or the left will move me, or change my mind as regards the action taken by the government on this question. A mere politician, thrown up by the dark and turbid waters of party, actuated by self-interest, can have no lasting influence over a question of this sort,—this is no party question; it passes beyond all such considerations, and such feelings should be far from every mind. Gentlemen mistake the feeling of the people of this country, if they hope to excite their admiration, or secure their confidence by displaying such newborn zeal in forcing confederation on

the people. The spirit of liberty will make itself heard wherever it exists. Let us take care of our rights, for political expediency in limiting a people's freedom is a dangerous principle, and will never satisfy a free people. I believe one of our great objects, at the present time, should be to foster a spirit of peace and harmony amongst our own people, and harmony can only be maintained by a patriotic, wise, and noble use of power. The people in every part of this country must feel that their rights are protected. So far from lending ourselves to any scheme which would threaten the safety or prosperity of our country, we should not hesitate to plant ourselves in opposition even to our political associates when they seek to promote it.

We are a free people, prosperous beyond doubt, advancing cautiously in wealth, under the protection of our good old flag, the only banner which floats over a limited monarchy and a free people. Under the British constitution we have far more freedom than any other country on the face of the earth. We have sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates, and who carry everywhere the deepest attachment to their Sovereign. It is the spirit of that constitution which unites and invigorates every part of the Empire, down to the lowest member, but to pass confederation, without asking the voice of the people, will only be sowing the seed of dissatisfaction and contention among a very large portion of our population. A representative of the people is bound by the highest moral obligations to respect their wishes, and obey their will, when their sober judgment has been ascertained. Now I deplore the intolerant spirit which I see every day manifested around these Benches; it is utterly inconsistent with the true spirit of freedom. The foundation of free constitutional government is the voice of a majority of the people, and so long as it deserves the name, and wins the affection of the people, it can never be in any great danger. Now if a question of right arises between the constituent and the representative body, by what authority shall it be decided? If you leave it to the Judges, they will tell you that the law of Parliament is above them. What then remains but to leave it to the people to decide for themselves? My political career may be short, and the accomplishment may fall far short of the purposes, but the consciousness of duty discharged shall be glorious. The people are not asking for any change, and this subject would sleep if it were not for the rising zeal of some who dread an appeal to the people. Interested men may call for measures which they themselves should be most ready to lament and condemn, but upon them let the responsibility rest.

Now, in regard to Confederation, I say frankly, that whenever a majority of the people speak in favor of union, let them have it; but I will not consent to a change of the constitution without their consent. If the representatives are unfaithful to their trust, and abuse their powers by disposing of the birth-right of the people, then responsible government is not worthy of the name. We have no right to surrender the liberties and privileges which we were appointed to guard. The multitude, even though they know very little of political science,