

some have said, "the Union of the Province of Quebec and the Province of Ontario." Hon. Mr. Longworth, however, was not exactly of opinion that it was quite impossible to do so. He was of opinion that any terms of Confederation could be proposed to the people of Prince Edward Island which would prove advantageous to their interests and well-being, but he believed that no such terms would be agreed to by the other Provinces; and he thought that, for it should, in any way, be made to appear that we acknowledge the principle of the Quebec Scheme of Union, and should, in consequence of such assumed acknowledgment, be dragged into it, it was necessary to express ourselves in the strong, unequivocal, and decisive language used in the framing of that Resolution. It had been said to the anti-Confederates, "If you object to the terms of the Quebec Scheme of Union, why do you not lay down such as you think it would be advantageous for the Island to accept?" He would reply, that we have no desire whatever to become a party in the projected Union of the Provinces; and it would be the height of absurdity in us to lay down terms for a compact which we are not only unwilling to enter into; but from which we are determined to stand aloof so long as we shall have the power to do so. These were the reasons why he was in favor of the second and third resolutions. Were we once to admit the principle of the projected Confederation, it would be impossible for us to keep out of it. He would go back to the inception of the scheme about three years ago. When in the Session of 1863 the question was first brought before the Assembly, whether it would be better for Prince Edward Island to enter into the proposed Confederation of the Lower Provinces, or to remain as she was in her separate and independent position, there was not found one member of the House to advocate her entering into such Confederation; on the contrary the whole House were of opinion that, if Prince Edward Island entered into the Confederation, she would inevitably be swamped by the weight of the debts of the other Provinces—that she would forfeit the right of self-government, and would, besides, be crushed by the weight of excessive taxation. The hon. and learned gentleman then went pretty fully into the history of the question of Confederation, from its inception up to the present time, for the purpose of showing that neither had the Scheme ever been favourably entertained by the Legislature, nor had Legislative Authority ever been given to our Island Delegates to enter into any consideration of it, either in Charlottetown, at Halifax, or at Quebec, with a view to our becoming a party to it. Upon what grounds, then, he asked, would our Confederation say that the Report of the Quebec Conference was binding upon us, when even the appointment of Island Delegates by the Government had been made independently of Legislative sanction—We were, indeed, only a small Colony, but we were possessed of a free representative constitution; and we had quite as much right to retain it as had the English to retain theirs. He had, however, yet to learn that Great Britain would, so long as we continued true to ourselves and firm in our allegiance to the British Crown, ever seek to deprive us of it. What had Prince Edward Island to do with it? Canada's obtaining that union, by means of Confederation, would confer no benefit upon us. It was all very fine to say we would, under Confederation, belong to a great country, and would consequently grow in wealth and importance; instead of being as we were, a little isolated insignificant Colony. We already, said the hon. and learned member, belong to a great colony—the greatest in the world—and we have no desire to belong to any other. Great Britain will never cast us off so long as it shall be our wish to

remain under the protection of her flag, and we are willing to do what we can to contribute to her strength and local resources, to make our representation fair and just in proportion to our means. I do not see that our present isolated and independent position, even although the other Provinces should confederate, would, in any way, prove disadvantageous to us, unless Nova Scotia and New Brunswick should erect hostile tariffs against us, but that I believe Great Britain would not allow itself to do.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN then rose and moved that all after the word "Resolved" be struck out of the Resolutions submitted by the Hon. the Leader of the Government, and that the following be substituted:

"As the opinion of this House, that the Confederation of Her Majesty's American Colonial Possessions would be, while in conformity with Her Majesty's frequently expressed desire, conducive to their welfare, separately and collectively: And this House believes that a plan of Confederation might be so framed as not to involve the sacrifice of any material interests on the part of any Province; that inasmuch as the people of Prince Edward Island do not appear to be prepared to regard with any favor the project of Confederation, it is unjust to press it upon public attention, as its discussion is only calculated to produce excitement and apprehension, without reasonable cause.

"AND FURTHER RESOLVED, as the opinion of this House, that there should be no vote passed by the Legislature of this colony in favor of a Confederation of the Provinces until the people shall first be afforded an opportunity of pronouncing their judgment on the question at a general Election."

The hon. gentleman then proceeded to say that he thought the question should not be pressed upon the people before they were educated up to it, and their judgment matured respecting it. As he had said to his own constituents, he did not think it was the duty or province of the Assembly either to pronounce in favor of Confederation, or to reject it, until the decision of the people should be fairly given, either for or against it, at the polls. With all due deference to the House, he begged leave to say, however, that he did not believe any decision either for or against Confederation, on the part of Prince Edward Island, would materially affect the action or determination of the other Provinces concerning it; and that, if they were favorable to it, Prince Edward Island would be placing herself in a very absurd and ridiculous position by refusing to accede to it. But while the question appeared to be settled in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and to be in a transition state in New Brunswick, he thought our wisest course would be to leave it as it now stood, for the calm and deliberate consideration of the people, until time and events should throw new light upon it, and, perhaps, bring new influences to bear upon their minds concerning it. He could not, however, for one moment suppose, that provided the other Provinces were confederated, Great Britain would allow Prince Edward Island to remain out of the Union, to be a source of weakness and annoyance to the Federation, which, if she stood alone and aloof from it, she, most undoubtedly, would be. He would then merely ask the Chairman to submit the Resolution, which he had proposed as an amendment to the Resolutions submitted by the Hon. the Leader of the Government, although it had been his intention to speak to some other points of the question. That intention he would then, however, forego; as another opportunity might, perhaps, be afforded him of carrying it into effect, and of repelling, at the same time, the unjust, the untimely, and the cowardly insinuations of bribery, corruption, and treachery, which had, by certain parties in the community, been thrown out, not only against him, but against other gentlemen, members of the Assembly, who had, in common with himself, and in pursuance of their honest convictions concerning the question, been the open