

not argued and discussed upon the basis that we were to deal with it finally; but I do not require to tax the memory of gentlemen opposite, for I shall refer them to the journals of the House, and prove by the resolution moved by the hon. member himself, that he knew that the action taken here last session was the consummation of the measure as far as this Legislature was concerned. In the amendment moved by the hon. member for Guysboro', we read:

"Therefore resolved, That it is the opinion and sense of the House that the Government and Legislature of this Province should be no parties to the consummation of any scheme for the Confederation of the British North American Provinces and Colonies, until an opportunity shall have been first afforded to the several constituencies of the Province at large, to express their views and opinions thereon in a constitutional manner at the polls."

It was, therefore, perfectly plain that the delegates were to go to England and arrange with the Imperial Government a plan of Union which would become the law through the Imperial Parliament, and yet in the face of this well known fact we have heard the hon. gentleman declaring that the delegates had exceeded their authority. The debate in this House, the discussion in the press, all go to show that it was everywhere known that the delegates were to finally arrange a scheme of Union. I have already read to you the Queen's Speech, declaring that we came clothed with the most thorough constitutional power to deal with this question, and that too finally.

New Brunswick, said the hon. gentleman, has been appealed to twice. Why is it that the people of Nova Scotia have not been allowed to express their opinions even once? At Quebec it was agreed that the scheme of Union should be submitted to the several Parliaments. It was the last session of the Legislature of New Brunswick, and the Government found that they had not a majority to carry the measure. They appealed to the people, who decided against the Government, and therefore all action in relation to the measure in this house was prevented, for every man felt that whatever were his opinions on the subject no Union was practicable unless New Brunswick came into it. Action was accordingly suspended in this province until a change should take place in New Brunswick. Subsequently the people there, having had the question fully explained to them, reversed their former verdict and gave a large majority of Union. When it became obvious here that New Brunswick would concur we submitted the question to this House. I ask the hon. mover of the resolution as well as its seconder if either of them will venture to say to the House that the position of the government in this Legislature is in the slightest degree analogous to that of the government of New Brunswick. They were called upon to take action upon the measure, and believed that by an appeal to the country they would be sustained, and consequently they made that appeal. Subsequently it was found that the tide of public sentiment had turned—the explanations which were made on this question had shown the people that they

had been egregiously deceived before, and accordingly the moment they were allowed to speak again they returned an overwhelming majority in favor of the great principle of union. The hon. member said that the Government had pressed this matter here with "indecent haste." Does he not know that this scheme of Union was decided upon at Quebec in 1864? It was a subject of agitation for nearly two years, down to 1866, but more than that, are not these same gentlemen who now charge "indecent haste" against us the men who, session after session, not only two years ago, but last winter as well, taunted the government and myself with cowardice, with failing in what was our duty to the house and country—for not having had the manliness to come forward and submit the question to the members of this Legislature. But when we knew that the time had come, when we could deal with this question not as a hypothetical measure, but one on which the House could take action in consequence of the change of sentiment in New Brunswick in favor of Union—when we found that the duty we owed to the House and country demanded that we should bring the question before the Legislature, to be dealt with in the proper constitutional manner, what did these gentlemen say and do? When they saw that they had miscalculated the intelligence and patriotism of this House and the public sentiment of this country—that instead of having the overwhelming majority that they had deluded themselves into believing they had, they were in an insignificant minority; then these gentlemen suddenly discovered that we were not open to the charge of cowardice and want of statesmanship; but that we were pressing the matter with "indecent haste" (Applause.)

The hon. member for Yarmouth asked why we did not submit the question to the people as they did in New Brunswick. No man, sir, in the history of constitutional legislation ever heard of so unstatesmanlike a course as a government dissolving the parliament in which they had a clear, undoubted majority to carry a measure which they believed would promote the general prosperity of the country. I do not appeal only to gentlemen who are ready to support the government on the question—not to gentlemen in opposition, who are ready to sacrifice the best interests of party at the shrine of patriotism—who think more of their country than of subserving the ends of party—but I ask the opponents of this measure not to give their votes in favour of such a resolution, when its advocates are obliged to confess that they have not in the whole range of constitutional government a single precedent in favour of the course they have chosen to pursue. But what does the hon. member for Yarmouth say about the last election in New Brunswick? "A very few votes did it, I would not be surprised if New Brunswick now went against it." Then the hon. member has himself given us a very clear idea of the futility of appeals to the people. He has seen New Brunswick one day giving its decision in favour of, and on the next against, Union.