

Provincial Secretary of Nova Scotia.—To the personal character of the debates in this House, as an argument for the knowledge that our union with Great Britain and New Brunswick would be to deprive the character of our Legislature, discussion. I admit and deplore the frequent introduction of offensive personalities here; but I ask why should we be vexed with such a charge, when any body who will take the trouble to read the recorded speeches of Nova Scotian legislators will readily acknowledge that it would be more becoming in them to take the beam out of their own eyes, than they should do in the present session, a scene of unparalleled, I might almost say disgusting personal abuse, occurred on the floor of the Assembly between the Attorney General and a member of the House. In view of those facts, it would be as well if they would confine their imputations of personalities to themselves. At present, the money that we raise among ourselves is spent on the Island, and I ask, what guarantee have we that, once absorbed in the Union, we may not have to put a budget framed to meet the railway charges of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick? I know not what may result from this overture, but I caution hon. members that if they sell their birthright, they may expect their country to retrograde as Cape Breton has done since her annexation to Nova Scotia. We have at present the system of self government and self taxation, and if there be some defects in the practical working of our institutions, it is a better to hear the ill we have than fly to others that we know not of. We have already an independent judiciary, and if our professional men and their clients should have to appear in the Great Supreme Court of Acadia, I do not see what improvement would be effected by the change. At present, we enjoy the advantages of the Railways in the neighboring provinces without the burden of the cost, and if we were prevented from those advantages, I admit the argument might be drawn in favor of the Union, but it should also be borne in mind that the Railway in New Brunswick derives a large amount of income from this Island. I was surprised at hearing the Hon. Colonial Secretary this morning when he spoke in terms of disparagement of our Legislature. A reference to our Statute Book will show that in many instances we have led the van of these Colonies in Legislative action. I will more fully refer to our law, if evidence, and our Executive Council is as proving the truth of my assertion. And cannot think that facts were strong in favor of the statement that our judiciary was so limited that others than the judges were frequently called on to preside at the trials of cases in which the judges, while at the bar, had been retained as Counsel or Attorneys. I know of but one such case, which was tried at St. Eleanor's two or three years ago. The Hon. Col. Secretary also told us that our internal communication would be improved by the increased outlay which the revenue of the united colonies could afford, and that capital would flow in on us after our separate constitution shall be merged in the union. As to the first argument, my impression is very decidedly opposed to it, and I cannot conceive that our identification with other countries, deeply involved in debt, will have the effect of inducing men of wealth to invest their property in the Colony. The statistics of the land show that, without the public lands, which they possess, without the Imperial Expenditure for naval and military purposes, which has been so abundantly, nay, lavishly, disbursed in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, we have thriven and advanced in material prosperity as did the old thirteen Colonies, by our own unaided resources. The very first result of a union with those provinces would be a uniform tariff, and while we hear complaints of our present scale of duties, it is to be remembered that in the neighboring colonies the people are taxed far more heavily. In view of all these facts, I repeat the question, what are we to gain by a union? Consider further, Mr. Chairman, the peculiarity which

would necessarily arise from our isolated position. All who hear me know that our Colonial Legislature must be the winter session, and I ask how many, on either side, if they would fancy this idea of crossing the Strait of Northumberland in January or February, to attend to their Legislative duties. Sir, I believe that this scheme has been devised more in the interests of the ruling parties in the neighboring colonies, than in regard for those of the people. The Illipps and Tappere would find a wider field for the exercise of their talents and their extension of their sway, but it is our duty to protect the rights of those whose representatives we are, and what public man will not hesitate to vote that our institutions shall become nonentities? We have been told, and with truth, that Scotland prospered after, and in consequence of, her union with England, in 1707. There might be some cogency in the argument, if before the union, she had possessed free institutions; but such was not the case, and she benefited by the change, and stands now among the foremost of civilized nations. The same remark is applicable, to a great extent, to Ireland, whose parliament could not levy a tax, until under the law known as "Poyning's," the proposition required the previous sanction of the English Cabinet. We all know that there has been for years an agitation for the repeal of the union, and we see at this day a people asking for a restitution of the privileges which we are invited to surrender. The mode in which the union between Great Britain and Ireland was carried through the Legislature of the latter country, I have no hesitation in denouncing as a gigantic piece of villainy. Millions of British gold were used in influencing the decisions of the Irish Legislature, in fact, so gross and patent was the corruption practised, that the Speaker of the House of Commons acquired the sobriquet of "the Undertaker" from his guaranteeing to the Government a sufficient number of votes to be obtained at certain prices. Here, thank God, we have a parliament which is, at all events, pure from any such taint. The argument, that we shall be materially benefited by forming a part of a country which will count its population by millions, finds no acquiescence in my mind, when I reflect on what I feel achieved for Switzerland against the most powerful nation of his time, and that Greece, under the protection of the leading nations of Europe, has maintained her separate national independence. While the Mother Country professes to her traditions, are we to be coerced by threats of the Stars and Stripes of the Northern States? I have no fear that the Agia, under which we have hitherto prospered, will be withdrawn, or that "the meteor flag of England" will be replaced in those colonies by that of the United States.

Hon. Mr. HENSLEY.—Mr. Chairman, acknowledging that the resolution does not pledge the House to an approval of an union of the Lower Provinces, I yet consider that the range which the debate has taken within the legitimate bounds of discussion. Without offering any observations upon the probable consequences to the Island of a cessation of the civil war which has so long raged in the States, I see no special reason to apprehend a successful invasion of the Colony, by the disengaged forces of the Republic. That subject, I am, however, willing to leave to the more qualified judgments of the hon. leader of the Government and the Speaker, who are both military men. The extensive land frontier of Canada justified the Imperial authorities in urging upon its Government the propriety and necessity of that great dependency taking measures for its own protection against hostile incursions, but nothing has yet transpired, as far as my knowledge extends, which is indicative of any intention on the part of the Mother Country to shadow her Colonial possessions. The naval power of Great Britain is our best protection, and I believe that it will be as available in our defence as ever. With references to the suggested union, I must confess that I cannot foresee the advantages to be derived from it; but I think it but reasonable to