

can in our present state of freedom from taxation. Reference has been made to the unsuccessful attempt, made at the Quebec Conference, to get an additional member for the Island in the Lower House. I cannot perceive that the additional representation would have, in any appreciable degree, increased our influence in that body. I am not, however, equally satisfied with the proposed Constitution of the Upper House. The prices of Canada, tea, sugar, &c., quoted by the hon. member for Belfast, do not prove that Confederation would enable the people of the Island to purchase them at the same rates; for in Canada a merchant can afford to sell at low rates, in consequence of disposing of large quantities at a time. The excise duty must be added to the cost of tobacco. The truth is, Sir, that Halifax must regulate the prices of West India produce in these Colonies. It would be glad to have the continued protection of Great Britain; but it is well known that these Colonies were to be added up to a sense of the duties of a nationality. It is but natural that John Bull should at length say, "If they will not defend themselves, let them go!" As I said before, this question is forced on us, and face it we must. We cannot doubt that the Americans look with greedy eyes upon the coal fields of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the acquisition of which would be of incalculable advantage to them not only in times of peace, but also in case of a war with Britain or France, or any of the other European powers.

TUESDAY, March 28.

#### Debate on the Union of the Colonies resumed.

Hon. Mr. HENSLEY.—Mr. Speaker, I shall conclude the few remarks which I was making last evening when interrupted. I was referring to the returns of importations into Canada and New Brunswick for 1863, showing that these Provinces did not manufacture nearly enough of boots and shoes, and other articles of the kind for themselves, and that consequently they could not supply this Colony. As regards tea and molasses which are said to be cheaper in Canada than in this Island, if this be the case it cannot arise from the fact that higher duties are paid on them there than in this Colony. But one of the principal points to which I did not refer last night was military defences. The argument advanced on this feature of the subject by those favorable to Union is that, in order to prepare for efficient military defence we require a central power. I, however, do not see the question in that light. As long as we contribute our quota of men and means, and the other Provinces do the same, I consider it would be quite as efficient a method of providing for defence as any organization into which we could enter. We are told that the General Government would take control of the general revenue and provide naval and military forces. In the event of a war with the United States, however, we know full well that there would be no chance of success without the aid of Great Britain, and it is difficult to understand how Confederation would increase our ability of resistance. By late papers I observe that the Colonial Minister, Mr. Cardwell, has introduced a bill into the Imperial Parliament providing for a Colonial naval force, to be supported by Colonial funds, but to be at the command of the Imperial authorities. It was laid down in regard to the measure that commissions could not be granted by Colonial authorities; they must be issued by the Imperial Government to be valid. If this plan can be pursued in naval affairs, may not a similar scheme be adopted in military matters? All preparations for defence must be arranged under the superintendence of the Imperial Government, and under British commissioned officers; and hence this is the case it is doubtful whether a central Colonial Government would be any advantage. We do not wish to shrink from our duty in regard to defence as subjects of the British Empire. Disagreeable as it might be to be taken away to fight in 1845 neighboring Provinces, still if the order should come it is not at all probable that we would refuse. Whereas the necessity of merging all these Legislatures together to have a central power when we are already all organized under the Imperial Government of Great

Britain. Another portion of the Report to which I allude is that which provides that the expenses of railways and canals connecting two Provinces shall be equally borne by all the Colonies. It was said by Mr. Galt the other day in Canada that it was necessary all their railways should have an outlet to the sea. This is what he terms a geographical necessity; but I do not think that this Island would benefit by these works. We have the same geographical necessity in the winter season that Canada has; our case is even worse, for we are surrounded by ice, and there is little prospect that anything can be done to improve our position, unless indeed we obtain steam communication over the Straits during the winter, as suggested by one of the delegates the other night. The intercolonial railway will confer very few commercial advantages on this Island. It will no doubt afford facilities for travelling; but its benefits to us will not at all compensate for the amount which we would have to contribute towards it by the terms of the Report. In view, then, of the nature of that Report, I am prepared to support the resolution submitted by the hon. Leader of the Government. I do not say that I would be opposed to Union on any terms; but I think that such terms as are contained in the Report are very unfair to this Colony. If agreed to I consider that the interests of the Island would be altogether sacrificed. Our taxation would be greatly increased without corresponding advantages. Some maintain that we should not be alarmed at taxes; they would be no burden providing we had additional scope for trade. But what more scope do we require, as we have already facilities for commerce as extended as the bounds of the British Empire?

Mr. BRECKEN.—I would gladly avoid speaking on this question, feeling, as I do, my inability to deal with it, as its importance and the interests involved in it require. Never in the history of this Island, since it became a British Colony, has a subject of such consequence been submitted for the consideration of its Legislature. If we are to view the proposition for a Union of the British North American Colonies as an optional one, which we may reject without imperilling our position as a dependency of the British Crown, I confess I cannot see in the terms offered to us in the Report of the Quebec Conference anything to induce us to close with the offer. If, on the other hand, the choice is between a Union with the sister Provinces and a severance of our allegiance to the Mother Country, I would say, let us be united, even at a sacrifice of our local interests. But I do not think that the latter is our position, although the advocates of the scheme profess to believe that it is. Why should we be in such a hurry to assume that it is? Previous to the Quebec Conference this question had not been pressed upon our attention by the Home Government, although we are now aware, from Mr. Cardwell's despatch, written after the receipt of the Quebec Report, that the measure is very favourably received by the Imperial Government. Nor is it at all to be wondered at that they should wish to see our present political position changed. Separate Provinces grouped close together with governments independent of each other, separate laws, different currencies and hostile tariffs; and, yet, all paying allegiance to the same Sovereign, is a state of things that will not, in all probability, continue very much longer. I am not opposed to a Union, provided just and equitable terms are secured to us; but it does appear to me that the urgent manner in which this question at this time is pressed upon us, is entirely owing to the action of politicians on this side of the Atlantic. It only requires a very slight acquaintance with the politics of Canada to be aware that the political difficulties and complications of that Province had arrived at such a pitch, and had become so perplexing, that party government was almost an impossibility; indeed, it would appear, that impending anarchy threatened them. The Hon. John A. McDonald, Attorney General of Canada, was, in Parliament, when moving the Address to Her-