

it would be more difficult to reconcile the friends and supporters of the Government, than its actual members, and Mr. Smith at once left Fredericton in order to prepare his principal adherents for the altered policy he proposed to pursue, asking His Excellency to observe the strictest secrecy on the subject until his return to report either the acquiescence of his friends, or the failure of his efforts.

A word with regard to this point. When he (Mr. S.) returned from his delegation to Washington, his colleagues informed him that strange rumors were afloat. The House was to be dissolved, and the Opposition called on to carry on the business of the country. When he saw the Governor he related to him what he had heard, and His Excellency did not deny their correctness. His Excellency turned from the subject and asked him what the Government intended to do with regard to Union. He (Mr. S.) replied that when the despatches and papers were laid before the House, they might decide to reconsider the subject, by the appointment of a Special Committee.

"Mr. Smith on his return informed His Excellency, on the 3rd of March, that his party generally were willing to assent to the course which he had consented to pursue. It was accordingly agreed to insert in the Speech on the opening of the Session, the recommendation of Confederation made by Her Majesty's Government, and as early as possible to move the appointment of such a joint Committee of both Houses of the Legislature as should ensure the adoption of a Scheme of Union, whilst the objections to the Quebec Scheme were to be carefully weighed and examined at the same time by the Committee.

What the precise alterations in that Scheme were which would have satisfied Mr. Smith His Excellency was never able exactly to learn; but he found that representation according to population, to which he entertained a strong objection, would not be regarded by him as an insuperable obstacle to union, should a larger share of representation be secured to New Brunswick in the Upper Branch of the proposed Federal Legislature."

The hon. member for York (Mr. Fisher) seemed to experience great delight at the position of affairs. He appeared, when in opposition, to be continually in the blues, but now he was quite elated, and the whole aspect of the man had changed, but he must caution his hon. friend to beware; the responsibility was now changed to his shoulders, and he should exercise great care and caution. He (Mr. S.) could not boast that noble blood coursed through his veins, he was not descended from a proud ancestry, he could not look back upon a long line of titled lineage, he was but of humble origin, was one of the people, but he had rights, and the people, to whom he belonged, had rights, and among the people he had friends, who had stood by him in troublous times, and he believed would do so again. It was a matter of little moment to the Governor that his Government should retire to the ranks of the people, but it was a question of

paramount importance to the people whether a minority of Downing Street should act with and by, or without and in direct antagonism to, the Council which was responsible to the people. He hoped a dissolution would now come, so that they could go to the country that this great question might be settled. This the rights of the people demanded.

"His Excellency, considering that the speedy accomplishment of a measure of union was now a matter of almost absolute certainty, on the 7th March, addressed to Mr. Smith a letter, of which the following is an extract, viz:

"I have been much gratified, though not surprised, to find that you are disposed to approach the question of union, as it now presents itself, in a large and statesmanlike spirit, and to realize as facts the necessities which are imposed by the actual condition of affairs. There is nothing which more distinguishes a statesman from a man incompetent to deal with great affairs, than this power of appreciating the changes thus made, and the obligation, (often a most irksome one,) of acquiescing in a course which, *per se*, he considers open to objection, in order to prevent evils of yet greater magnitude.

"You have it in your power to render the Province the inestimable service of depriving its accession to the principle of union of that character of a party triumph, which it must otherwise wear, and of those feelings of bitterness which such a triumph would engender."

Mr. Smith did not contradict the presumption on which this letter was founded, and verbally expressed his acknowledgments for the terms in which His Excellency had spoken there in of his conduct."

He (Mr. S.) would refer more particularly to this letter by and bye. He had the power to show it in its true light, and thought he could most unmistakably prove that it was called forth entirely to get him into a snare.

"Having thus, therefore, as he presumed, ascertained that his Council were not indisposed in their own way, and at their own time, to recommend to the Legislature the adoption of a union policy, His Excellency felt that much forbearance was required in order that this change of course might be accomplished in the manner which the Council might think, least injurious to themselves, and most calculated to ensure the ultimate success of the measure; and with this view he sought to secure the co-operation of some of the leading friends of Confederation ordinarily hostile to the Government.

In doing so it was His Excellency's desire to secure and strengthen the hands of his administration in the conduct of a difficult enterprise, believing it to be of the highest importance that this measure should not be carried as a mere party triumph, but as the expression of a national wish; nor did he suppose that the course he then took could be misunderstood by those in whose interests it was taken.

It is true that Mr. Smith, and on one occasion one other member of the Govern-

ment, remonstrated against this course, and Mr. Smith observed that it was unnecessary, as he felt that he could carry out his plan without any assistance from his political opponents, an assertion the correctness of which His Excellency felt disposed to question, and which, even if accurate, appeared to him of doubtful policy, as it was desirable that the union should be accomplished in virtue of as general an agreement as possible among the leading men of every political section in the community; and His Excellency more than once suggested that the principal advocates of Confederation should be called upon to meet Mr. Smith and his colleagues in order that a line of action might be adopted by common consent with regard to a question of such general importance, and with respect to which, now that the Government had adopted the principle of union, it seemed difficult to believe that a common understanding might not be reached.

Upon the distinct understanding, therefore, that the Government was endeavoring to procure the passage through the Legislature of resolutions affirmative of the principle of union, and with the impression that an address praying Her Majesty to move the Imperial Parliament to give effect to such resolutions was to be subsequently adopted, His Excellency felt justified in omitting, at the request of his Council, from his speech at the opening of the Session the strong recommendation of union which he had originally intended to introduce, but the responsibility for which his Ministers felt they could not then assume.

To what extent the other members of the Executive Council agreed with their President, His Excellency cannot say, as excepting on a few occasions in February, he held little communication with any of them on the subject; but His Excellency is convinced that when Mr. Smith returned to Fredericton on the 5th of March, he imagined that he would be able to carry out the pledge that he had given, and that he fully intended to do so."

"Little communication with the members of the Council on the subject." Yes, for he (Mr. S.) had always found His Excellency unwilling to discuss any matter of importance with more than one member of the Council at a time.

"Since the commencement of the Session, however, the course of the Government has shown little indication of a movement in this direction."

He would again appeal to his friends in the House as to what he had told them had passed between the Governor and himself on this question. He would ask them if they did not know what the Government intended to do, if they had not been informed and consulted with and advised of the policy and course the Government intended to pursue? It was to appoint a select committee, not indeed to draw up and pass resolutions, but to report and suggest objections to the Quebec Scheme. And now in what a new and strange position did they stand. At that moment the people of the country were without a Government and His Excellency without advisers. He had no doubt the position was satisfactory to His Excellency, and that he would be glad to assume the whole responsibility of governing the country without any Council at all.