

can form a good practical judgment upon government in general, and even a better one than those in office, who cannot see their own defects and errors.

The first move in regard to a union of any kind was made in the session of 1864 by this Legislature. The Provincial Secretary then moved a resolution asking us to empower the Lieutenant Governor to communicate with New Brunswick and P. E. Island, in reference to the appointment of delegates to meet at some central point, to take into consideration and agree upon a basis for a union of the maritime provinces. That resolution was passed almost without opposition. I think it was the duty of the delegates first to have reported, for the information of the people of these provinces, what their success was as regards a union of the maritime provinces. But the action taken by the delegates at that time as to a maritime union passed away like a morning cloud or a dream in the night,—poor Nova Scotia was lost sight of, and a delegation to Canada was formed, without asking the lower provinces whether they were willing or not.

I think it is the duty of every man around these benches to define his position in regard to this great question. My position is this: I am in favor of a union of the maritime provinces, but not a union with Canada; that was my position from the time the scheme of union was first brought forward, and I still entertain the same views, and I believe that it is the view of a very large portion of the people of this country. Before I would betray the trust reposed in me, or consent, by any act or vote of mine, to surrender one jot or one tittle of the rights, or the honor, or the glory of this country "my right hand shall forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

We have heard a good deal said about the Fenians, and about disloyalty to the Crown.—What does all this mean? Is it to frighten the people into Confederation? Nova Scotia is as loyal as any other country on the face of the earth, but do not disturb the birthright of the people without their consent. Sir, as regards the Fenians or any other foe, whenever they come to disturb the peace of our country, I as one am ready to meet them under the British flag—the flag of freedom; but I intend on this occasion, at whatever hazard or sacrifice of a personal kind, to do what I consider is my duty to my constituents and the country at large.

The principle which lies at the foundation of our constitution, is that which declares the people to be the source of political power. A constitution written on paper is not a safe one, a constitution to be safe must be written on the hearts of the people. The powerful temptation to betray our trust, held out by the Government, to surrender up our own convictions, ought to be resisted; a steady adherence to truth, whether in favor or out of favor, must mark the course of every man who will not lose his own respect. I do not despise popularity, I respect it. But it is that popularity which follows, and not that which is sought after; and if there be one quality, which a representative of our country ought to cultivate at the present time above all others, it is independence. Not a defiance of the well understood wishes of the people; his course

should be a manly and steady adherence to principle, through good report and evil report: a stout defiance of what he considers right through sunshine and through storm. Such independence every man should cultivate who undertakes to serve his country. Caesar, who yielded to that infirmity of noble minds—the love of power, fell in the very Senate Chamber under the avenging dagger of Brutus.—Again, Napoleon's brilliant but unwise career was checked, at the moment when he gained his highest position. When he had kept the nations in dread, he was sent a prisoner to an island far from every field of his glory, and where the dashing billows mocked at the surges of his own passions. Our liberty, once taken away, may never return, and I see by the features of the proposed scheme, if it be carried into effect, we would be exposed to two dangers: centralization and disunion;—the General Government would have gigantic power, and might employ its functions to enrich one section of the union at the expense of the other. Its complex character—blending the powers of the General Government with those of the several Local Governments, exposes it to dangers from its own action.

We are yet in the freshness of youth, and the fairest of our sisters, our seaboard and mineral wealth hold out a strong temptation to those abroad. But, sir, I would say with all sincerity, let the people of Nova Scotia make their own choice. The power of figures has been brought forward in gigantic appearance before the people of this country, differing in the various calculations to the amount of some millions of dollars, but it would puzzle the brain of the best mathematical scholar to arrive at the real truth of the matter. We may rely upon it that trade will regulate itself like water, it will find its level. That union is strength, is true, but to be strength it must be a whole union, not a half. We see nothing like a united public opinion in favor of Confederation in this country,—the contrary is the case, public opinion seems to be split throughout the land,—so much so, that a small majority in favor of the resolution would be a very poor safeguard of a lasting union. It has been said with a good deal of force, that the power to deal with this question is invested in the representatives of the people. I do not deny but they have such power, for a government with a large majority can do almost anything. But such power in regard to a change in the constitution without the consent of the people of this country will never be exercised by me. Slight causes have given rise to the fiercest and most cruel wars which history records, the ploughing up of a few acres of soil plunged the states of Greece into a sanguinary conflict. An attempt to collect ship money shook the empire of England, and drove Hampden to the field, where he lost his life in one of the first battles ever fought for constitutional liberty, and brought the anointed head of a king to the block. A tax of a few cents on a pound of tea drove the colonies into a war, which broke the dominion of the British government, and left them independent states.

Again, look at Ireland. She constitutes a portion of the British Empire. What battle has been fought in modern times by the British