

tend, and said he would be back by the middle of October prepared to assist us in carrying out any measure we agreed upon. Now you see the same man who thus bound himself to assist us in promoting anything that the government of the day and his own political friends might concur in, to-day in the "Morning Chronicle" denouncing these gentlemen, his own tried political associates, as traitors, and holding them up to the execration of their countrymen all over the province. If there was a spark of gratitude in his heart he should know that the men he is denouncing as conspirators are those to whom he owed the position and all the advantages that he has enjoyed for the past ten years. They are the men who sustained him in this house, who sent him to England and enabled him to secure the Imperial office which he lately held, and this is their reward! If I stood in the position that Mr. Howe stands in to-day on this great question of union, I would forgive the hon. member for denouncing me as a traitor and a conspirator, and feel that he had reason to insinuate that I was influenced by the most base and unworthy motives. Having said this much, having read the hon. member for East Halifax a lesson which he will probably never forget, I come now to the question as it lies before the house. I ask whether we are in a position to deal with this question. It has been denied that we are—it has been said that this is a change in the constitution of the country which must be ratified by the people at the polls, if it is to be constitutionally made. What, I ask, gave Nova Scotia her constitution? From what source does it come? Looking at the quarter from which it comes do you find anything to lead us to suppose that there is anything unconstitutional in a Parliament dealing with a question of this character. You find her Majesty's ministers, the very sources from which our constitution was received, day by day urging, not that the Legislature shall be dissolved, and an appeal made to the people of this Province, but that the representatives of the people here assembled, in virtue of the constitutional power they possess, should deal with this question. You find the very highest authority in reference to constitutional matters, the British Government, committing itself unhesitatingly to the only statesmanlike position, that the Parliament of the country, the representatives of the people, had the power to deal with all such matters—that the people of a country are assumed to be present in the persons of those whom they have elected to represent them. Is that constitutional doctrine or not? Is it sustained by British practice which is our great exemplar, or opposed even to American practice, or to constitutional usage in any part of the world where constitutional government exists, that the constitution of a country may not be changed by the Parliament? What do you see at this moment in England? When the present House of Commons was elected, the question of Reform was hardly mentioned at the Polls; the people had no opportunity of expressing their opinions on the subject; but now you see the Parliament thus elected, preparing to deal with its own constitution, by adding nearly 500,000 electors to its list of voters. Members of Parliament have declared that the change is so fundamental that it will hand over the

governing power to a different class; but no one has rendered himself ridiculous by declaring the Parliament was not competent to deal with this question, and bring about this important change in the constitution of the country.

Is not Congress, at this moment, changing the Constitution of the United States in the most important respects? The time to ascertain whether a question is constitutional or not—to obtain a dispassionate opinion from the public mind in the country—is not when it is a subject of excitement and controversy. You must go back and study the pages of the history of our country to ascertain if you can find upon the record what are the real and deliberate utterances of public men on both sides of politics. I am prepared to go back and turn up the page of Nova Scotia's history, and give to the house the statements of public men of all shades of politics, that will be clear and conclusive upon the subject. The house will recollect that many years ago the Hon. Mr. Johnston, when sitting on the Opposition benches, proposed a resolution, providing for a Union of British North America.—That resolution became the subject of calm and dispassionate discussion, as it should always obtain at the hands of the Legislature. Two of the ablest men who have ever figured in the affairs of the country were sitting on the Government side—I refer to Mr. Howe and Mr. Young. These gentlemen discussed the question in all its aspects, and it was never questioned whether the Parliament had the power of dealing with the constitution, but, as I shall prove to you, the utterances of the ablest statesmen on both sides went to show that the power of the Legislature to change the constitution of the Province was admitted in the clearest and most conclusive manner:—

"Mr. Johnston said on this occasion:—"I do this, sir, that at the outset it may be seen to be my desire that the Imperial and Colonial Governments should be drawn together under this great question and to mould it, after full deliberation into a form fit to be presented for the consideration of the several Legislatures, and that I presume not at this stage of the enquiry to offer any specific scheme of my own."

Mr. Johnston thus emphatically recorded his opinion as to the power of the Legislature to change the constitution.

It was on this occasion that Mr. Howe advocated Representation to the Imperial Parliament, which seems like an *ignus fatuus* to be dancing before the eyes of some hon. gentlemen still. Mr. Howe, however, in the course of his remarks, gave in his adhesion to some such plan as was devised at Quebec. He said:—

"By a Federal Union of the Colonies we should have something like the neighbouring Republic. and if I saw nothing better I should say at once let us keep our local Legislatures and have a President and Central Congress for all the higher and external relations of the United Provinces. Under a Federal Union we should form a large and prosperous nation, lying between the other two branches of the British family, and our duty would evidently be to keep them both at peace."

Here you will see you have not only the authority of the mover of this resolution, but of the Hon. Jos. Howe, who stated that if he did not see a means of accomplishing the object he wished, he would go in