

Queen of these realms, one whom, by virtue of her position no less than by the virtues that surround her throne, every British subject is bound at all times to venerate. That Sovereign not only commands the respect of every subject of her Crown—her virtues are not alone the theme of every British lip and the pride of every British heart, but surrounding nations attest her worth and admire her example. But it is a gross breach of parliamentary decorum to mention that name here. Disloyalty has been charged upon those who stand in opposition to the present proposition; as one I repel it with indignation. It is not in my nature, as it is not in my name, to harbour for an instant a disloyal sentiment. I can proudly appeal to the history of our country and ask if any who have borne the name which I have the honour to bear, could ever be supposed to be tainted with that vile trait? Sir, as a British subject, entitled to the free exercise of an undoubted right, I intend to deal with this question, and if, in doing so, any aspersion touching my loyalty to my Sovereign be cast upon me, I shall hurl it back with utter contempt and thorough indignation upon its author. Sir, I regret deeply that Her Majesty's name has been brought into this discussion; I do not regard it as of so much consequence that Her Ministers have been mentioned, because it is at all times the privilege and indeed the duty of every subject to criticise their acts. We have been told too that the Queen's representative in this country was in favor of the present measure;—sir, I attach the same importance and distinction to the representative of the crown as to the crown itself; it is Her Majesty speaking by her properly authorized agent, and the rules which apply to the exclusion of the Queen's name from debates in Parliament should apply equally to the exclusion of the Lieut. Governor's name. We have been also told that the General in command and other distinguished individuals, civil, religious and military, are combined in favor of the measure. But, sir, notwithstanding all this potential phalanx that is arrayed in its favor I feel that I am a free man, I claim the rights and attributes of a free man, speaking in the presence of a British free Assembly, I have the right to criticise the judgment they have formed and an equal right to give expression to my own. Therefore when this list of authorities is paraded before us I cannot but feel that it is an empty parade—it is worth nothing in my estimation—it does not weigh a tittle in the scale. I feel, sir, and I claim the right to express the sentiment, that those individuals, eminent though they be, are not more capable of forming an opinion upon this subject than myself, and I might add that my judgment is formed under the influence of a responsibility which does not attach to them. In saying this I mean no disrespect to any of them, and I feel well assured that none of them would charge me with any design of disrespect. I therefore think that the allusions to which I have referred were unjust and reprehensible attempts to influence this Assembly. What is the measure that we are now called upon to sanction? Twist it or turn it as you please, it is no less than a decided change in our constitution; and how has the scheme effecting that change been brought

here? Have the people of this country at any time suggested the expediency of the proposal to the government or to the legislature? No sir. This house was elected entirely independent of that question—it was not before the people when we were elected. Had the case been otherwise we should not perhaps have seen the faces of some gentlemen who are sitting here to-day. It seems, however, that a good many years ago the question of a Confederation of the British North American Colonies was propounded in this house:—I would ask those who were present at that time whether it was intended to be a practical measure—a proposition to result in anything, or was it a mere theoretical declaration of the abstract advantages of union? No one can presume to say that it was anything more than the latter. Again, some years ago this house, by a pretty large majority, declared it expedient that a delegation should proceed to England to confer with delegates from the neighbouring Provinces to ascertain whether it was not desirable and practicable to effect a union between the Maritime Provinces of British North America. But, sir, that was a very different idea from that now pressed upon our attention. What is the condition of these Maritime Provinces? Their people are situated in connection with each other—are possessed of the same interests, have the same common sympathies, residing on each other's borders, and having daily intercourse with each other. Is that the character of the people with whom this scheme is to force us to unite? Why, as we know, there is a wilderness between the Lower Provinces and Canada, we have no sympathies or interests in common with the people of that country. They are as much strangers to us as the people of West Indies. Surely those gentlemen who talk so vociferously about disloyalty can have no sympathy with the people of a Colony in which disloyalty has been so rife as it has been in Canada. This House proposed a delegation for a union with a people with whom, as I have said, we had many interests in common, and who, if the union were consummated, would form with us one homogeneous whole. What then happened? For some reason or other those charged with the authority to perform this duty which I have mentioned felt themselves at liberty to disregard the authority of this House. They went to Prince Edward Island and there they found another body of gentlemen from Canada,—instead of turning back as they should have done, and asking this Legislature to consent to a conference with delegates from that country they ignored our feelings and authority and went straight into the arms of the Canadian delegates. That was the first step, and it was a fatal step—a step subversive of the powers of the Legislature, and injuries to the feelings and interests of the people of this country. That was the step which has caused so much agitation, so many heartburnings, if not worse, throughout this country. Had they come back here and told the people of this Province that they failed in their original mission, and that no Union of the Maritime Provinces could be effected, they would at least have afforded the people an opportunity of saying how far they were disposed to go into the large question; they did not do this, but they took upon themselves the whole responsibility of connecting the scheme called