

Colonies. Instead of dealing with it, however, I say that they have run away from it. And that is what is called a bold and manly course. (Hear, hear.) Instead of that it was, in my opinion, a most cowardly course to pursue. (Hear, hear.) It was a stratagetic course, the effect of which was to avoid the difficulty, and hold their places in the Government; but was anything but a manly one. The honorable gentleman spoke of this as a treaty. I am surprised that a gentleman for whose astuteness I had learned to entertain a very high estimation, should be carried away by such a fallacy as that. I maintain, sir, that no treaty has been submitted to us. It is not found in the resolutions, nor yet in the despatch of the Governor General transmitting them to this House. Neither the resolutions nor the despatch contain any intimation of there having been a treaty between the respective provinces, and certainly we have had no correspondence laid before us purporting to relate to a treaty between this and the other provinces. (Hear, hear.)

MR. SHANLY—The treaty was constructed in Conference, and therefore no correspondence was necessary.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Well, we know that there was correspondence between the colonial governments which has not been submitted to us. It was referred to in the resolutions submitted to the Legislature of Nova Scotia. That correspondence, though moved for in this House on the first day of the present session by my hon. friend from Hochelaga, has never to this day been brought down, and yet, sir, it has been pretended that it is a treaty. If it is a treaty, why did not the Government submit the treaty or the correspondence which proved the existence of a treaty? The seventeenth clause, sir, is the only one that can be quoted as having any bearing whatever on the question of a treaty. It reads as follows:—

17. The basis of representation in the House of Commons shall be population, as determined by the official census every ten years; and the number of members at first shall be 194, distributed as follows—Upper Canada, 82; Lower Canada, 65; Nova Scotia, 19; New Brunswick, 15; Newfoundland, 8; and Prince Edward Island, 5.

Of course, sir, the honorable gentlemen undertook to bring before their respective parliaments the propositions which they had agreed upon in conference, and which, if acceptable to all the legislatures, were to serve as a basis of a Constitution for the contem-

plated union. But there is nothing in that clause to show that the governments, or the provinces which they represented, were to be bound to regard this whole scheme as a treaty, and to lay it before their respective legislatures as such. On the contrary, we find Ministers in the Lower Provinces stating that the whole of the scheme might be modified. (Hear, hear.) And, sir, if it is a treaty, and the governments were bound as by that treaty to stand or fall by it, that treaty has been grossly violated by the other parties thereto. What, sir, was the course pursued in Newfoundland? Why, the leader of the Government himself moves a resolution in the Legislature, to the effect that the consideration of the whole question be postponed until next session, with a general election intervening. If there was a treaty binding on all parties—and there cannot be a treaty unless it is binding on all parties—that is the very nature and essence of a treaty. If honorable gentlemen are justified in their statement that it is a treaty, do they not, by necessary implication, thereby charge the governments of all the other provinces with a breach of faith? (Hear, hear.) But, sir, there was no treaty, and it was never intended to consider these resolutions as being in the nature of a treaty. It was simply intended that these heads of agreement—for they are hardly worthy of the name of resolutions, so clumsily are they strung together—should be brought before each Legislature in the shape of propositions, to be considered and voted upon separately, at the same time keeping in view the importance and expediency of adhering to the agreement arrived at in the Conference. Any other agreement in a conference composed of members of the Opposition, as well as of the governments of the Lower Provinces, would have been simply absurd; but our Government were shrewd enough to see the difficulties that were likely to arise in considering the resolutions separately, and that it would be impossible to obtain the assent of this House to all of the self-contradictory, and, in some cases, absurd propositions, contained in this scheme; and, therefore, they hit upon this expedient of proclaiming it to be in the nature of a treaty, of using their strength as a Government in its favor, and of asking the honorable members of this House to vote for it *en masse*—to vote in stultification of all their antecedents upon every question that has engaged the attention of this Legislature, or that has been the subject of discussion in our Provincial Parliament during the last quarter of a cen-