

country, and in proportion to the number of children in each section. The money should be under the control of the commissioners and superintendent, and so divided that there would be no mistake about it. The great object should be to distribute the advantages of education as equally as possible.

Mr. COLIN CAMPBELL said that he was in favor of sectional assessment as being the most equitable principle.

Dr. BROWN doubted the advisability of denuding the Commissioners so largely of power, though he thought the bill was in many respects an improvement.

Mr. KILLAM questioned the propriety of altering the policy of dividing the school grant by population. He moved an amendment that the "Provincial grant be divided among the counties as heretofore."

On a division the clause passed by a very large majority.

The Committee rose and reported progress.

Hon. Mr. SHANNON reported up an act in reference to the Board of Health in Halifax.

The house adjourned.

TUESDAY APRIL 3.

UNION OF THE COLONIES.

SPEECH OF MR. MILLER.

MR. MILLER said—I rise, Mr. Speaker, to address the House on a question of the deepest importance to the people of this country—a question in comparison with which all other public questions may be truly said to sink into insignificance—I mean the great question of British Colonial Union. If, sir, the subject was less important than it is, I would not venture, as I now do, to trespass on the attention of hon. gentlemen in reference to it, in the absence of any motion before this House. The course I am about to adopt is the result of much deliberation, and I shall bring myself within the rules of the House by making an enquiry of the Government before I resume my seat. Sir, on no occasion during my comparatively short professional and public career, have I risen to address any body of men impressed with a deeper sense of the grave responsibilities of my position than I now feel. But, on the other hand, I can truly say, on no occasion, involving public responsibilities, have I been animated by stronger convictions of the propriety of the step I am about to take than I am at this moment.

For the past two years, Mr. Speaker, the question of an Union of the British North American Provinces has been before the people of this country, and I need hardly state my views have obtained some publicity, and myself some prominence, in opposition to the Quebec scheme of Confederation. To that scheme, I am now as hostile as I have ever been. I believe it to be unjust to the people of the Maritime Provinces in some of its most important features. I believe to force it upon us, without important modifications, would ratify the end it is intended to promote—the permanency of British Institutions on this continent. These were my opinions in 1864. They have undergone no change. They are my opinions to-day.

But, Sir, it is well known to this house and to the people of the country, that, notwithstanding the strenuous and unwavering oppo-

sition I have given to the Quebec scheme of confederation, I have invariably declared myself in favor of an equitable union of these colonies. During the agitation of this question, I have spoken on it in Parliament and at Public meetings, in several counties of this Province, and nowhere have I failed to express in unequivocal language my desire for union on fair terms. I can appeal to those who have listened to me in both extremes of Nova Scotia, whether in Cape Breton or in Lunenburg, in support of this assertion. But, Sir, I can appeal to something stronger, if the consistency of my conduct in this Legislature is called in question,—I can appeal to the official records of this House. I can go even further and appeal to the gentlemen with whom I have co-operated for the last eighteen months in opposition to the scheme of the Quebec Conference, many of whom are opposed to all union, and who will bear me ready witness that my co-operation in the anti-union movement in this Province, has only extended to the details of that scheme. The subject of an union of British America, since I have been capable of forming a judgment on the question, has found favor with me. Apart from the material advantages of such an union, there is something in the assurance of national strength and greatness to be derived from it, which is in sympathy with the best feelings and aspirations of every British American whose future is wrapped up with the future of this country. For years past I have entertained a strong opinion on the subject,—an opinion that the period was fast approaching when these North American colonies must cast off their present political habiliments, and assume others more consistent with their advanced position, their surroundings, and their altered relations to the Empire. I was in favor of their political union before the subject was presented to the country in any tangible shape. I am in favor of it now, after having given the question much attention and thought, and after the bitter and prolonged agitation it has produced in this Province. The first opinion I publicly expressed in favor of it, was in the debate in this House on the resolution introduced in 1864, by the hon. Provincial Secretary for a union of the maritime provinces, when I am correctly reported to have used this language:—

"If the resolution before the House contemplated an union of all the Provinces of British North America on equitable terms no one could hail it with more satisfaction than himself. Such an Union he trusted to no distant period would become both a commercial and political necessity. He looked forward hopefully to the day when the inhabitants of these noble Provinces, united under one government, might stand before the world in the proud national character of British Americans. From such an association they would indeed derive national strength and dignity worth some sacrifice to obtain. They would then possess a population and country whose immediate status and inevitable future destiny would command respect. An union of the Maritime Provinces and the great territory beyond would give us a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with all the diversified resources necessary to the most unlimited material progress. In favor of such a proposal most of the arguments urged in this debate would have real point and force, and not appear, as they now did, absurd or inapplicable."

From the above paragraph, Mr. Speaker, it will be seen, and indeed the fact is one of noto-