

Conference held at Quebec, to consider the wider question of general Union of the British North American Provinces, to attend which, your Excellency, on the invitation of the Governor General, appointed Delegates selected, as were the Delegates to the former Conference, from each of the political parties in the Legislature.

6. We beg to assure Your Excellency that we shall not fail to give our most earnest consideration to the Resolutions adopted at the Quebec Conference, upon the momentous subject of a General Union of the Provinces, and also to the Despatches from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State (The Colonial Department, relative thereto.

THURSDAY, March 2.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

On motion of Mr. Brecken the House went into the order of the day, viz: Committee of the whole on the Draft Address in answer to His Excellency's speech. Mr. Yeo in the chair.

The Chairman first read the whole Draft Address, which is as follows:

To His Excellency George Dundas, Esquire, Lieutenant Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Island Prince Edward and the Territories thereto belonging, Chancellor, Vice Admiral, and Ordinary of the same, &c., &c.

8. We thank your Excellency for having, in compliance with the Resolution passed last Session, appointed Delegates to confer with Delegates appointed by the Governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, respectively, for the purpose of discussing the expediency of a Legislative Union of the Maritime Provinces, and we shall be happy to receive the Correspondence on this subject, together with the Report of the Delegates.

4. We shall be pleased to learn the origin of the second

The first four paragraphs of the Address having been again read, were agreed to without discussion. When the adoption of the 5th paragraph was moved, Hon Mr COLES addressed the Committee to the following effect:—

There is no doubt, Mr Chairman, that this House will give due attention to the subject of the paragraph which has just been read, and I wish that the Government had done likewise. They have received the Report of the Conference held at Quebec, and, that being the case, they should have met the Legislature with a decided declaration of opinion on the subject of the Union of the Colonies. On a question of such importance—the most momentous that ever was submitted to the consideration of the Legislature of the Island—a question involving the interests of all the North American Colonies—I assert that the Government should have given a decided expression of opinion, and I am sorry that they have not taken the responsibility of declaring their policy; instead of doing so, they have brought the subject before us as being non-political. While I admire the man who maintains an opinion of his own, and admit that, in political parties, the several members must often yield their individual views, yet, when a great general principle is involved, as in the present question, the people have the right to know what are the opinions of the Government which they placed in power. When that great supporter of the Conservative party in England, Sir Robert Peel, differed from his colleagues on a great public question, he took his own ground, and was respected by men of all parties for his independent spirit. It may be said that under the scheme of Confederation, the principles of 'Responsible Government' are maintained, but the people will view it with caution, if not satisfied with the terms. One gentleman has published the statement that a majority of the Government is opposed to the Union; but if that be a faithful expression of opinion, their acts are inconsistent with it; no Government can take its opponents into its confidence. In New Brunswick a member of the Executive resigned his seat and office, rather than remain to listen to the plans of a policy he did not agree with. We have a similar case nearer home, and no man of honor will consent to act as a spy. Here we have the Government putting into the situation of their only legal adviser a red hot opponent. I mean to convey no imputation on that gentleman; but I blame the Government for professing one set of opinions and appointing to so important an