

ment of New Brunswick, though on this latter point I am not prepared to express any opinion.

But suppose the government of New Brunswick is not prepared to concur in Union of the Maritime Provinces, it was desirable that that point should be definitely known, and the public mind be no longer distracted with the consideration of that question.

By this resolution the government will be authorized to open negotiations, and see what prospect there is of obtaining a legislative union with that province. The opponents of Confederation here have professed to be in favour of the Union of the Maritime Provinces, and as far as I have an opportunity of knowing that has been the view of some of the opponents of Confederation in New Brunswick. Whatever view, therefore, this house may take of the larger question of a Union of British North America, I trust they will sustain the resolution now submitted to their consideration.

TUESDAY, April 11.

House met at 3 o'clock.

THE SCHOOL BILL.

Hon. PROV. SEC. moved the third reading of the bill "For the better encouragement of education."

Hon. Mr. LOCKE opposed the principle of assessment as most obnoxious to the people, and moved a resolution to this effect:—

*Whereas*, the system of direct taxation for the support of schools has been condemned by and is obnoxious to the wishes of the people of this Province, and instead of promoting has retarded the progress of education;

*Therefore Resolved*, That this bill be referred back to committee for the purpose of striking out so much thereof as establishes that principle, and that there should be substituted therefor clauses providing for subscriptions or contributions by fees to supplement the proposed grant for the support of schools.

Hon. PROV. SEC. said that the resolution asked the house to stultify itself and to resort to an old system which had been tried and found inadequate. He hoped a majority would not be found, for party purposes, willing to adopt such a course.

Mr. LOCKE disavowed all party feeling in the matter, and expressed the opinion that the present law had retarded education and closed one half the schools. He thought the Legislature had no right to meddle with the pockets of the people as the bill proposed.

Hon. ATTY. GEN. said he had yet to learn that the people were willing to go back to the old system which had been abandoned last year by a vote of nine-tenths of the Legislature. For years past all parties had acknowledged its inadequacy to meet the requirements of the country, and the necessity of an improved system of education. Notwithstanding all the difficulties that naturally arose in putting into operation a bill new to the people, the results on the whole had been satisfactory and encouraging. Under all the circumstances, it was absurd for the hon. gentleman to ask the house to go back to a system which had been condemned by nine-tenths of the members last year.

Mr. ARCHIBALD made a few remarks in support of the principle of assessment, which had been advocated by leading minds in the House

and country for many years. He would not support a resolution which went to establish a principle which he felt was unsuited to the public requirements, and was condemned by a large majority last winter. The bill of last year was objectionable in many respects, but the object of the present measure was to remove many of the injurious features of the former, and place education on a more satisfactory basis.—Some details he strongly objected to still, but of its vital principle he approved.

Mr. STEWART CAMPBELL said that the question as to whether the rejection of the assessment principle would destroy the bill, and embarrass the Government, was not the point to be considered at all. What they were called upon to ascertain was, whether that principle was in accordance with the feelings and wishes of the country. If it was, then let it be accepted; but if not, then it was the duty of the House to reject it, irrespective of any party considerations whatever. He differed entirely from the hon. Provincial Secretary, when he said that they would stultify themselves by rejecting the assessment clause; on the contrary, he thought that it would be the Government that stultified themselves when they called upon the house to pass a measure which for the last twelve months had received universal condemnation throughout the country. The hon. Provincial Secretary stated that the house had already acted upon this principle. That vote was taken in a thin house, when fifteen gentlemen recorded their votes against it, and eighteen for it; and he believed that if they were not influenced by pressure since brought to bear, the majority would be the other way. He denied that the bill of last year had been a success in the country. Even admitting that in some populous districts it had met with support, that was no answer to the fact that the large majority of districts lying outside of these were deprived of the means of education altogether. He disclaimed all idea in opposing this bill, of wishing to embarrass the government. If it had that effect, they had brought it on their own heads. He opposed it because he knew it to be obnoxious to his constituents. If it was a good bill, he called upon the government to appeal to the people and allow them to pass their judgment upon it; but he did not think that ever they believed that it was in accordance with the wishes of the people. He called upon gentlemen opposite to record their opinions upon this question, according to their own convictions and what they knew was the feeling of the country. He did not think that it was the duty of any gentlemen, however much they might desire to sustain the government, to perpetuate a system so obnoxious to the people.

The assertion of the hon. Atty. Gen., that education was in a better position now than under the old law, had been so often refuted that he would not take up time by alluding to it now. The petitions upon the table shewed the contrary; and it would have been better for the government to have paid some regard to them, rather than pass them by unnoticed.

The hon'ble gentleman concluded by calling upon gentlemen opposite to act independently and fearlessly upon this question—their duty to their constituents should be their consideration—that to the Government was only secondary. He would rather always remain in opposition than be a slave to any Government.