

cession of Quebec, would not only be unjust to the inhabitants of this Colony, but prove disastrous to their descent and most cherished rights and interests as free people, enjoying the benefits of a primitive Constitution, guaranteed to them by the Imperial Government of Great Britain; and, as respects the second Resolution, which declares that "we cannot admit that the Federal Union of the North American Provinces and Colonies, which would include Prince Edward Island could ever be accomplished upon terms that would prove advantageous to the interests and well-being of the people of this Island,"—I am also prepared to vote for it in its full integrity; although, should it be found possible so to modify it—without any acknowledgment of the principles of Confederation set forth in the Report of the Quebec Conference—as to render it more acceptable to such hon. members as may think it rather too strong in its present form,—to such a modification of it I shall certainly offer no opposition.

MR. BROKEN. Having, at length, in the House, last Session, and subsequently, at public meetings, expressed his views concerning the projected Confederation of the British North American Provinces, he did not think it necessary that he should then enter into any thing like a full recapitulation of them. The Resolutions submitted to the Committee were certainly very strong; the last, in his opinion, was too strong. However it was to be remembered that in debating the question of Confederation, they were not debating a party question, nor one of only passing interest; but one, their determination of which might affect, advantageously or otherwise, the destinies of Prince Edward Island for generations to come. John Bull had always claimed, as one of his greatest privileges, the right to grumble, and to stand out, to the last moment, for whatever he thought himself fairly entitled to; and that privilege the people of this Colony had never been backward to claim and assert. The Quebec Confederation Scheme was, it was well known, favourably viewed by the Imperial Government, and equally so, it was said, by Her Majesty the Queen; yet admitting all that—and he was not disposed to dispute it; for he could see no impropriety in its being so regarded at Home—he did not think, as some did, that we could fairly be subjugated to the imputation of disloyalty because, so far as that Scheme was meant to apply to Prince Edward Island, we were adverse to it, and should express our aversion to it in the strongest language. He certainly did not, for one moment, imagine that the Imperial Government would ever consent to sanction any Scheme of Confederation, by which it was obvious to them that the interests of even the smallest and most feeble of the Colonies would be sacrificed for the promotion of those of the largest and most powerful. The Imperial Government were, doubtless, bent upon carrying out the Confederation Scheme; but, in their determination to give it effect, they contemplated nothing but the general good of all the Provinces which it was intended to embrace. They could conceive nothing but the retardation of the individual interests and progress of these Provinces and general feebleness, as the natural consequences of our governments, independent of each other, our diverse laws, our different currencies and hostile tariffs. This justly appeared to them a most anomalous state of things. A group of Provinces, lying closely together, and all paying allegiance to the same Sovereign, could not, or at least ought not, it seemed to them, to have separate and conflicting interests; and, therefore, it was, seeing that all of them were rapidly approaching to a state, the further expansion of which would require that, as respected all the relations of trade, commerce, laws, and government, they should, as it were, intertwine with and lean

upon each other—that the Imperial Government thought the very best thing which could be devised for them, was such a Union as would consolidate their growing strength, and give to all an interest in, and a share of, the individual or peculiar resources and privileges of each. And to that end, it had doubtless appeared to them that no Scheme could be more happily framed than that of the Quebec Conference. In that opinion, however, at least so far as it respected Prince Edward Island, they were certainly in error; and what had especially led to their mistake, with respect to us, was their ignorance—for it could not be forgetfulness—of our peculiar position, resources, and trade. They did not comprehend our exceptional position. That they should be ignorant on that head did not surprise him; for, at the Detroit Trade Convention, he found several of the Delegates to that Convention, although comparatively speaking our near neighbours almost as ignorant respecting our resources and trade, as most of the people of China and Japan. The Imperial Government thought that, if we went into the Confederation, our material interests would all receive an immediate and most sensible progressive impulse; and that, in fact, our prosperity would increase in every direction. As respected our representation in the Confederate House of Commons, small as the number was at which it was set down in the Report, on the basis of population, and decennial readjustments on that basis, at the expiration of the first ten years of the Union, our representation would be still further diminished. The allowance of £51,850, to be made to this Island, in consideration of the transfer of our revenue and of the powers of taxation to the General Parliament, was manifestly a very inadequate compensation for our relinquishment of our Revenue, now amounting to £70,000, and which, in a few years would, in all probability, amount to £100,000 per annum. That allowance would not suffice to defray our annual local expenditure; and, whenever it should be found necessary for us to undertake any large public work for our own local benefit, we would have to provide for the expense by extra direct local taxation. As respected the direct benefits which it was said by the advocates of Confederation, we would derive from the Canals and Railroads of the other Provinces, and towards the past and future cost of which we were to contribute, considering that we should benefit from the use and advantage of them for five months of the year, it would be about just as reasonable to say that on account of the benefits which we might derive from the construction of public works in Kamtschatka, we should contribute towards the expense incurred by it.—His greatest objection to the Confederation Scheme was based on his dread of the enormous taxation to which we would, in all probability, be subjected under it. The construction of fortifications, the creation of a Confederate army and navy to afford protection against the annexation proclivities of Brother Jonathan, the deepening and widening of the Canals of Upper Canada, and the construction of other public works, which would be required as the country became more and more opened up and improved, would necessitate such an outlay of public money as could not be raised independently of extraordinary taxation; and to prevent either that, or to check any extravagance on the part of the General Government, the small share which we should have in parliamentary representation, would render us powerless. The hon. and learned member said he did not go quite so far as some anti-confederates; for he believed that, if the other Provinces went into the Union we should not be able to keep out. We were told that the British Government would not deprive us of a Constitution which they themselves had guaranteed to us. But we