

Confederation. All that we have yet heard is the sanction of the Colonial Minister to the holding of a Conference in Canada, consisting of representatives from all the Provinces, to consider the larger scheme of Union, and his opinion that the Report of that Conference upon the whole was creditable to the assembled delegates. And that much too has been accepted graciously to please Ontario, owing to the knowledge of which her politicians have become involved. When Confederation, then, have those for its advocates yet told us that we shall be compelled to go into Union? And say that unless we enter the proposed Confederation we shall not get a single ship or man from the Mother Country to defend us? The Home Government has given no intimation of the kind. In fact it seems to be ready in regard to the Union movement. The Colonial Minister stated in effect in one of his despatches that if the people of the Colonies were desirous to enter into a Union, Her Majesty's Government would throw no obstacle in the way. This would no doubt be no such obstacle as has been held up by some members of this House. Indeed Mr. Cairnes could not appear at all satisfied with some portions of the Report. He has taken exception to the provision with respect to the prerogative of pardon, and to the principle of having a fixed number of nominated life members in the Legislative Council. To the latter principle I made strong objections at the Conference, and fortunately for me I also referred to the matter in the public prints before the Colonial Minister's Report was received. My reason for opposing such a provision was that as the members of the Legislative Council were to be nominated from the different Councils in the different Provinces, a number of them would be old men, who had been obstructives, and might remain to afflict their lives, consequently a dead-lock would probably soon occur between the two branches of the Legislature, in which case an appeal would have to be made to the Imperial Government to settle the dispute. They have had quite enough of disputes in Canada already. In that Province, Sir, the parliament buildings have been burned, and the Stars and Stripes thrown out to the winds. Such proceedings, Sir, have never been seen in the Lower Provinces. (Cheers.) And are we now to be told that we must enter a Union with them, and submit to such taxes as they may choose to impose? The amount to be allowed this Colony under the proposed scheme is some £35,000 a year, and more than this we are not to receive for local purposes though our revenues should increase to £200,000. What does Mr. Galt say respecting allowances to the local governments? In explaining this part of the Report he remarks:—

"Now one objection to confederation was made on the ground of expense, and in order to meet this, every effort had been made to reduce the cost of the Local Governments, so that the local machinery should be as little costly as possible. For it would not do to affront the intelligence of the people, and tell them we had devised an expensive kind of machinery to do a very insignificant amount of work. The gentlemen from the Lower Provinces had been asked what reductions they could make in the Government of the several colonies, and the figures he was about to give would be most satisfactory as showing the disposition of those gentlemen, who had reduced their requirements to the lowest sum. In her estimate of outlay for 1864 for objects of local character the Province of Nova Scotia had provided for an expenditure of no less than \$667,000, but had undertaken to perform the same service in future under a confederation at \$371,000; or a reduction of 44 per cent. The expenditure of New Brunswick in 1864 for the same objects was estimated at \$404,000. From causes explained at the time and shown to be satisfactory, she proposed to reduce the expenditure to \$303,000, and at the same time undertook within ten years to make a further reduction of \$63,000, making a total reduction to \$240,000. Prince Edward Island would reduce her expenditure from \$170,000 to \$124,000, and Newfoundland from \$479,000 to \$350,000. In regard to Upper and Lower Canada he would not undertake to say what reduction would be made; but he could show that under the scheme proposed they would have the means of limiting the present outlay which was,

taking the average of the last four years, \$2,021,979. Besides that there would be an additional item brought against them for the interest on the debts of their debt, and of the other Provinces, making their total charges, at \$2,000,000. The plan was the present outlay of Canada for such services as it was necessary to make a provision out of the general fund for the purpose of enabling their Local Legislatures to carry out the machinery of Government. It was proposed to take money from their money chests of money they possessed excepted from local systems, and then to give them from the public chest in sufficient subsidy to enable the machinery to work. The capital was formed on the wants of Nova Scotia; it was, as first proposed to form it on the wants of New Brunswick, but these were found greater than those of the former, which had consequently been taken as the basis. The estimate was that 50 cents a head on the population of Nova Scotia would be sufficient to enable her to work her local system. She would want \$264,000. In the case of Upper Canada, 30 cents a head was considerably more than she wanted on the present day, and in the case of Lower Canada was at least adequate with the present local funds that would become available to her. But it was not that it was necessary from the fact that it was impossible to draw a distinction between the part of the country and another. But it was not intended to hold out any prospect to future extravagance to local Governments, but it was hoped that by the operation of natural and simple checks would be put upon expenditures and would bring them down to the reasonable or, at least, proper, limits, becoming lazier. Throughout the subsidy proposed to be given to local legislatures was fixed, not at an increasing rate according to population, but at the rates which existed at the census of 1851. By this means, as the population increased, the subsidy would not increase with it. Upper and Lower Canada would thus get within a fraction of two million dollars, and when their population increased to five millions instead of two and a half, would get no more. If they increased their expenditure in proportion to the growth of population they would be obliged to resort to direct taxation; and he thought they might trust that the people themselves would keep a sharp watch over the local Governments lest they should resort to direct taxation. He thought no surer check could be put upon them than thus fixing the grants they were respectively to receive."

Now, Sir, this is the opinion of the Finance Minister of Canada, who may be considered as good authority in regard to the contemplated working of the Quebec scheme; and he urged it in an address to his own constituents at Sherbrooke, as a reason why they should gladly accept that scheme. Here we may see the pliable condition to which this Island would be reduced under Confederation,—our revenues taken away, scarcely enough allowed us to work the machinery of the local government, and should more money be required when our population increased, it would have to be raised by direct taxation. The people of this Colony were battling four years to gain responsible government, and almost obtained. I believe it has given general satisfaction. But, Sir, were we to adopt this Report, it would deprive us of our constitution and leave us no corresponding benefit in return. It is urged that as a compensation for our loss we would become part of a great union that in time would form a mighty nation. But I ask what greater nationality can we enjoy than that with which it is our pride and privilege at present to be connected? What greater flag can wave over us than the time-honored banner of Old England? I do not think that Great Britain wishes to throw us off; on the contrary I believe that her statesmen see that the separation of the Colonies from the parent state would cause trouble. Sir, I took upon this talk about the Mother Country casting us off from her apron strings, and this shaking of the stars and stripes in our face, as only stories intended to frighten the timid. Let us remain true to the Mother Country and she will stand by us. Separate as we are from the other Colonies, our hands are just as strong and our hearts as willing to aid in the defense of the Empire, as they could be under any scheme of political union.