

leave us, would be little better than a town council; we would have this building here merely to look at. As to the General Legislature I consider the representation in it allowed to this Island unfair and unjust. I think the four Lower Provinces, at least, should have as many members in the Upper Branch as Canada. The five representatives allotted to us in the Lower House would not give this Colony much independence; but as our population will not increase so rapidly as that of Canada, there is a prospect, through the operation of one clause in the Report, that our five representatives would dwindle down to three. Taking all these points into consideration, therefore, it is clear to me that we have nothing to gain but much to lose by adopting the Quebec scheme.

Adjourned.

FRIDAY, March 31.

Debate on Union of Colonies resumed.

Hon. Mr. COLES.—Mr. Speaker: As leader of the Liberal party of this Island, I felt in a peculiar position while attending the Conferences on the question of Colonial Union now before the House. I felt that in acting as a Delegate I had not my own interest merely to look to, but that of a party who have acknowledged me as their leader for nearly eighteen years. And now, Sir, in addressing you I desire to make such explanations as may satisfy my constituents and the party with whom I am connected, in regard to the course which I have pursued on this question. Explanations of this nature may fairly be expected from me, since I am the only Delegate to this House opposed to the Confederation Scheme of the Quebec Conference—being one against four. It has been stated by former speakers that we all agreed to the scheme while at the Conference. I object to this statement. I admit that we were all unanimous in passing the first resolution of the Report; but it was only with the understanding that the details of the scheme were to be just to the several Provinces. Those who affirm that there was unanimity at the Conference ground their assertion, I believe, on several speeches delivered at evening meetings. But, Sir, I contend that an occasion graced with the presence of ladies—such being the case when I spoke at Ottawa—was not the proper place to attack any person, or make strong exception to any vote passed at the Conference. I did not do so then, but at the Conference a few days before, I said that if the grant for the purchase of the lands of this Colony was not conceded, they might as well strike Prince Edward Island out of the Report altogether. The public men of Canada know my views on the subject: this is evidenced by a paragraph which lately appeared in the *Toronto Globe*, a paper under the control of the Hon. George Brown. *The Globe* says:—

"The anti-Confederation papers at Halifax are making much of the fact that two of the Prince Edward Island delegates who were at the Quebec Conference have, since their return home, declared against the Confederation scheme. These gentlemen are the Hon. E. Palmer, Attorney General in the present Government, and the Hon. George Coles, a leading member of the Opposition. The attitude assumed by these gentlemen is but what was to have been anticipated from expressions made by them while in Canada, so that their hostility to Confederation is not any indication of the way in which the scheme has been received by the people of the Provinces. The gentlemen had their minds made up before their constituents had heard the details of the Quebec scheme at all."

Even my speech at Ottawa did not give satisfaction to the supporters of Confederation in Canada, for afterwards, the brother of the proprietor of the *Toronto Globe* came to me, at Toronto, and desired that I would not persevere in the sentiment to which I had given utterance, namely, that the scheme would require to be submitted to the people for their approval. All that I said on that occasion which can be construed as favorable to the series of resolutions passed at the Quebec Confer-

ence, is, that it was creditable to the delegates from so many Provinces that they could agree to draw up such a Report. I still hold to that opinion; and the British Government has also acknowledged that it was a creditable Report. If the people, I remarked, were satisfied with the scheme, I had nothing more to say on the subject. But that I was personally dissatisfied with the new Constitution is clear from the fact that I refused to sign it. Before I left Canada, the Secretary of the Conference came to me, supposing probably that I was opposed to the Report, and asked me if I would sign the document. I said no. He then answered that if I should agree to sign it he would send it down to Prince Edward Island. I said, "you need not trouble yourself." I may also mention that Hon. Mr. Gray of New Brunswick, in one of his speeches after his return from Canada, stated that all the delegates at the Conference had signed the Report, and would be bound in honor to support it. This, I thought, was going too far, so I wrote a letter to the newspapers bare contradicting the statement, and showing that it was not correct at least as regarded myself. And, Sir, we have been informed during this debate that two others of the delegates from this Island have not signed the document. The absence of their signatures, however, is a matter of little consequence, as they have agreed to the Report, one of them having broadly declared that its principles are just and liberal to Prince Edward Island. It was understood that the proceedings at the Conference should be secret; but they have been alluded to by delegates at other places, therefore there can be very little impropriety in referring to them in this discussion. I may also mention here that when the proposition in favor of secrecy was first made at the Charlottetown Conference, I objected to it, but stood alone in my opposition. I was then allowed to state the fact to my constituents. I make these explanations, for it may be necessary in the course of my remarks to refer to the proceedings at the Conference in self vindication. Only two of us, I believe, who were delegates to Quebec, object to the terms of the Report. For this opposition we have been charged as being almost traitors. Indeed it has been affirmed that Anti-unionists are guilty of combining with Americans against British interests. Hear what the Hon. D'Arvy Molise said in the Canadian Legislature on this subject. During the course of his speech on the Confederation question, in replying to some interruption from the opposition benches, he remarked:—

"The hon. member for North Hastings Mr. (T. C. Wallbridge) seemed to repudiate the idea that American influence had anything to do with the result of the New Brunswick elections. He had to tell that hon. gentleman that one of these successful candidates was agent for the American line of steamers, the International line, which did all the carrying trade to New Brunswick, and there was not a pound of the stock of that Company held in New Brunswick. (Hear, hear.) It was in point of fact a fight—a fair stand-up fight of Yankee interests on the one side and British interests on the other; and those who were rejoicing over Mr. (Lalor's) defeat were in reality rejoicing over the defeat of British interests. It was a contest between prejudice and patriotism; between ignorance and intelligence, between Yankee influence and the broad national principles of British North American policy. (Hear, hear.) Those who rejoiced over this state of things might congratulate themselves if they chose; but it was for the House to stand by the true public opinion of the country. It was for us to show an example of firmness and good faith in carrying out this scheme. It was for us to show the Empire that we were determined to adhere to our original resolution and that we were not people who would forget our determination in a few days or a few weeks." (Cheers.)

I deny these charges. I believe that the Anti-unionists are just as loyal as any Unionist can be. I feel that my loyalty is equally as sincere as that of those who so zealously advocate the Quebec scheme, for I have yet to learn that Great Britain has said we must go into