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# The Newfoundlander.

No. 3,657.

St. John's, Thursday, April 20, 1865.

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## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, Feb. 28.

(Continued.)

Mr. WYATT was sorry that he was not present when this Resolution was laid before the house, and that he had not heard the speeches of the Hon. Attorney General and Mr. Shea. He also regretted that he had not up to this time seen a report of the hon. Attorney General's speech. He (Mr. Wyatt) felt that on a matter involving such vital interests to the country, it was necessary for every representative to give the question his most serious consideration, to calmly weigh every particular, so that he might be enabled to arrive at a just conclusion. He saw that the hon. member for Placentia and St. Mary's, Mr. Shea, had fault with the hon. Attorney General for saying that the advantages which Confederation would bestow were entirely speculative. He (Mr. Wyatt) quite agreed with the opinion of the hon. and learned Attorney General on this point, and thought that before we hastily entered into any great speculation of this kind, we should see whether its working would be practicable or not. Now in the return which had been laid before the House, shewing the difference between the Canadian tariff and our own, he believed there were some mistakes. During them he observed that no allowance had been made for the difference between the Imperial and Old English gallon, which would of itself produce a difference in the estimate of some £3,000. Now it was very clear that notwithstanding the advocacy that had been given to this project by hon. members, they were not agreed among themselves as to the terms on which they would join this union. There were very few who would accept the report of the Conference as it stood, and there were many others who had particular objections to each paragraph in that Report. He (Mr. Wyatt) must say that he felt some difficulty in standing up to speak on so important a question as this, before gentlemen so accustomed to debate. It had been stated that when these Resolutions were laid before the House, some hon. members said to have rushed out and clamorously informed the people that the country was to be sold to Canada, and the result was the public meeting which had lately been held in the town. He (Mr. Wyatt) believed that that meeting had only been called for the express purpose of petitioning for a postponement of a decision on this question. He had the honor of presenting a petition from the Commercial Society, that simply prayed for a postponement. The hon. Speaker had the second time thrown down the gauntlet to the merchants, and had singled him (Mr. Wyatt) out as their champion. Now he (Mr. Wyatt) was not there in any such capacity, but merely as a representative of the people of Bonavista Bay. As a junior member of this house, he had waited for his colleagues to first express their opinions on this question. He regretted that up to the present time the Surveyor General had not placed his opinions before the public. Now he (Mr. W.) could not perceive what the advantages were which were to be received by this country when we joined this Confederation. It appeared, however, that we were to be driven into it by threats. It was stated that if we did not join, we would be compelled to pay for our military defences. In the event of a war under this Confederation, would not Canada have quite enough to do to defend her own territory? Our share of the expense of the new nation would be more than we would be able to pay. He did not see, in the financial statements put forth, an adequate allowance for the maintenance of an army and navy for Canada. The hon. member for Placentia and St. Mary's, Mr. Shea, would lead us to believe that such would not be necessary. That hon. member said—"As regards the burdens the confederation would entail, an army and a navy were held out in prominent relief, and the alarm of tax payers is sought to be excited. He had already on a former occasion explained his views on this head, and they are not changed by further consideration. The colonies are expected to assist themselves, but no intention exists of placing on them so great a burthen as an army and navy would create. While we are dependent, manifestly unable to sustain so great an obligation, its imposition would be imposed to all sense of justice, and the relation we hold to the mother country. No doubt the day will come when the Confederation will, from increase of population and wealth, necessarily cease to be a dependence, and with the best wishes of the mother country, from which these colonies will never voluntarily separate, an independent national position will be assumed. When that time does arrive, an army and a navy, and the other obligations of national existence will doubtless become necessary, and the country will have the ability to sustain these burdens. But at present we have no need to deal with such considerations. Mr. Mill, the great writer he had already quoted, though belonging to the school that holds the colonies of light value to England, yet admits that "as the mother country claims the privilege, at her sole discretion, of taking measures or pursuing a policy which may expose them to attack, it is just that she should undertake a considerable portion of their military defence, even in times of peace; the whole of it so far as it depends on a standing army." That this is the view entertained by H. M. present Government is evident from the paragraph in Mr. Cardew's dispatch:

"A very important part of this subject is the expense which may attend the working of the central and local governments. Her Majesty's Government cannot but express the earnest hope that the arrangements which may be adopted in this respect may not be of such a nature as to increase, at least in any considerable degree, the whole expenditure, or to make any material addition to the taxation, and thereby retard the internal industry or tend to impose new burdens on the commerce of the country."

"These words would be an idle mockery if it were contemplated to impose on the Confederation the heavy obligation an army and a navy would involve. We may therefore conclude that the just and equitable policy which leaves the charge for the present at least with the Imperial Government, is that which it is proposed to follow, and that we need not indulge in any serious objection on this account." Now how did that agree with the statement in the speech of the hon. George Brown? He (Mr. W.) would read an extract

"In Mr. Tilley's estimate of expense nothing had been allowed for the Army and Navy. The hon. A. S. Smith puts down its cost at \$2,500,000 per annum. Mr. Smith, states that he had examined the resolution of the Conference carefully, and could find no such item provided for, and during all the discussions of Conference, he never heard it proposed to establish an army, and construct a navy."

"The Hon. George Brown, at the dinner already referred to, at which the New Brunswick Delegates were present, said: "I cannot conclude without referring to some other things which have received the grave attention of the Conference. And the first point to which I desire to call attention is, the fact that the delegates have unanimously resolved that the United Provinces shall be placed at the earliest moment in a thorough state of defence. The attacks which have been made upon us have created the impression that those Provinces are in a weak and feeble state; if, then, we would do away with this false impression, and place ourselves on a firm and secure footing in the eyes of the world, our course must be to put our country in such a position of defence that we may fearlessly look our enemies in the face. It is a pleasure to me to state, and I am sure it must be a pleasure to all present to be informed, that the Conference at Quebec did not separate before entering into a pledge to put the Military and Naval defences of the united provinces in a most complete and satisfactory position."

"To prove the correctness of Mr. Brown's statement we have only to refer to the Published Scheme, Article 13 is as follows: "Militia—Military and Naval Service and Defence." Mr. Smith then was fully justified in adding \$2,500,000 for the Military and Naval Service."

The military and naval defence of the confederation could not be provided for without very great expense, of keeping an Army and Navy would be very large; and we would have to pay our proportion of the cost. However grand the idea of Confederation might be, the true basis of the question was the pounds, shillings, and pence, no matter how much hon. gentlemen might sneer at that view of the question. Every one had admitted that the expense of the new nation, at first, would be very great. He (Mr. W.) considered that we were going to obtain all our manufactures from Canada, was a purely speculative one. We certainly had the testimony of the hon. member for Carbonear, Mr. Horke, that leatherware could be imported at a cheaper rate from Canada than from England, and that the articles imported were as good as the home manufacture. But again we must not forget what had been universally admitted, that during at least six months of the year the Navigation of the St. Lawrence would be closed. And would hon. gentlemen say that that would not tell against us? Again, it was held out to us as an inducement to join the Confederation, that the Canadians would establish a dock here. He (Mr. W.) believed that if we had one, it would be of great advantage to us. He, however, thought that it was very questionable whether we would ever be induced to the Canadians for one. Again, he thought it would be years before Agriculture could be made anything more than a mere auxiliary to the fisheries. And now, that the fisheries have been unproductive for years; and although large prices have been obtained for produce, those persons engaged in the fisheries who have been only partially successful are in absolute want. How would it be if we joined the confederation, and the fisheries were unproductive? would we be able to obtain a grant from the Federal Government for the relief of our poor? Or would we not be compelled to raise the means of relief by direct taxation? It had been admitted on all sides that the system of local assessment for the relief of the poor could now be carried out here. He was surprised to hear the hon. Speaker say that the delegates had obtained as good terms for Newfoundland as could be expected. He (Mr. W.) must say that it these were the best terms that could be obtained for us, we should boldly state at once that we could not join the Confederation. The question had been proposed to us at a very unfavourable time, when the country was to be at its lowest ebb. He would like to know whether the stamp tax which existed in Canada was to be applied here? And if so, in what shape or form? The people of this country could not bear direct taxation. See how difficult it was to collect the present water rates. Why, in many instances, the ground landlords were compelled to pay the rates, from the extreme poverty of the tenants. Then it must be remembered that we would also have to pay the sewerage rates, and further direct taxation was out of the question, even in the capital; and still less in the outports could direct taxation be resorted to. His own impressions, from the first, were decidedly favourable to Confederation, which he regarded as a very grand and imposing question. But the terms proposed in the Resolutions of the Conference at Quebec were not such as he considered for the advantage of Newfoundland to accept. So far he had seen nothing that could induce him to go into it. He would be sorry to deprive his constituents of any benefits which might flow from it, if really there would be any to counterbalance the disadvantages under these Resolutions. He was very glad indeed that the Resolution before the chair had been proposed, which provided that the question should be submitted to the constituents previous to a final decision being come to upon it. He thought the administration of our affairs and resources would be much better in our own hands than in those of any eight gentlemen whom we might send to Canada. A delegation to England on that question had been suggested. He was not in favour of sending home a delegation; because he thought the interests of the country were safe in the hands of the gentlemen interested in Newfoundland resident there, who had an intimate acquaintance with our circumstances and wants; and who were deeply interested in the prosperity of the country. They would bring much parliamentary influence to bear on the question, and would watch the progress of affairs. In the meantime, until we had more reliable information, and could obtain better terms, we had better abstain from any proceedings committing the country to any course. Holding these views, he had much pleasure in supporting the Resolution before the chair.

Mr. McGRAHAD had listened with the greatest attention to the speech of hon. members on both sides of the House on the great and important question before the chair, the Confederation of the British North American Colonies. This was a vital and important subject to the future interests of Newfoundland, and one that he thought should be dealt with honestly by every hon. member of the House. The question had been ably and fully discussed that it was not his intention to go into it at any great length. After listening to the many lengthy, able and eloquent speeches of hon. members who had addressed the House, both for and against Confederation, he must say that, to his mind, the arguments in favor of Confederation were the more convincing. Still there were some modifications which he thought were most necessary before we should

one most necessary condition he (Mr. McGrath) considered to be a guarantee for the establishment of steam communication, both with Canada and England. He believed hon. members were agreed that without steam communication with Canada, the Union could not be effectively or beneficially carried out. He fully concurred in the Resolution before the chair, that no decision be come to on the question until after it is submitted to the constituencies. This would give the people ample time for the consideration of the question, which would thus be submitted to the whole country; and the House would be relieved from the great responsibility of deciding a question of such vital importance to the present and future generations. He, for one, could not have agreed to any other course; for he would not have taken the responsibility of voting for the union without its being previously sanctioned by his constituents. There was no anticipation of so important a question coming before the House, when hon. members were returned by their constituents; and therefore the electors throughout the Colony should have the privilege of pronouncing upon the question, previous to a vote of that House being taken upon it. Looking at the present depressed condition of this colony, and contrasting it with the general prosperity prevalent in the other British North American Provinces, he (Mr. McGrath) anticipated a favorable result from the appeal to the people. He believed they would be most anxious for union. He must say that he could not see how otherwise this country was to be raised from its present state of depression. The fisheries were from year to year becoming gradually less productive, the country was falling into debt, pauperism absorbing the revenue, and leaving no surplus to be applied to public improvements and the development of our resources. Taking these circumstances into consideration, one would imagine that almost any change for Newfoundland would be for the better. If we visited many harbors along our coast, we would find establishments, once flourishing, now falling into decay, the majority of the fishing population losing all energy, owing to bad fisheries, and no appearance, as in former years, of attention to agriculture or any other pursuit from which they could gain an independent livelihood. Considering all these matters, he thought a union with the other Provinces afforded the best prospect of elevating the condition of the people and promoting the best interests of this Colony. But, as he had already observed, the question was one for the decision of the people themselves, whether they would go into the union, or return a majority to the next House opposed to Confederation. He had, therefore, much pleasure in supporting the Resolution before the chair.

Mr. KAVANAGH rose, not for the purpose of throwing any additional light on the great question now before the country, but merely to show his constituents how he felt in the matter; and it would be for them to judge of his conduct. Many and powerful arguments had been put forward, both for and against Confederation. He (Mr. K.) was glad to find that the people were alive to the question, in which their interests are so deeply involved, for if that question of Confederation was carried, it might entail great and permanent ruin on the country. He was glad, however, that the decision of the question was to be referred to the people themselves. The whole country would thus have time for its consideration, and its discussion by the people would, no doubt, have the best results. They would have an opportunity of considering it deliberately and in all its totality. It would be well that they should consider how far it would be prudent on their part to transfer to strangers the power of enacting their laws and levying upon them any amount of taxation they pleased; also to consider how far it would be wise to give up Canadian control of the Crown lands, mines and minerals of this Island, and more than that, whether they would submit to additional taxation to meet the outlay for improvements in the other colonies, and for the military expenditure of the Confederation. These improvements can be of little or no benefit to the people of this Colony, while many improvements are urgently required here, which would be of the greatest benefit to them. Would the people consent to their rights and privileges passing from them for ever? Should they consent to all this, they would deserve the blackest servitude. The British Government had, in their wisdom, conferred upon us a free constitution, fully satisfied that we were able to manage our own affairs. Were we, then, going to give up that great boon? He (Mr. K.) said no. Let our heart's blood flow to preserve our free constitution under the British flag. Much had been said on that great and important question. Some hon. members spoke of the great benefit conferred on Scotland by the union with England. No doubt Scotland was a great gainer by that union. But he would ask permission to turn to another question, and ask how Ireland has been under her union with England? Had she gained any benefits by that? How has it fared with that lovely land of the sun, which might be said, for its fertility, to be flowing with milk and honey—that land whose sons are brave, and its daughters virtuous, who send forth saints and heroes to instruct man and combat tyrants—heroes who never struck their flag to an enemy, and the plains of Waterloo could bear testimony to that fact, in the person of the late distinguished Duke of Wellington, who was a son of that misguided Island. H. (Mr. K.) would ask the question again—Was Ireland benefited by the union? On the contrary, she lost every thing that was dear to her people. Let any person take up Sir Jonoth Barrington's life and fall of the Irish Nation, read it with care, and let him say what Ireland lost by her union with England. No country ever rose so quickly, in the short space of eighteen years—more than Ireland did, whilst she had the full control of her own affairs. But when she lost that she sank far below the level of a petty province; and is now steeped in misery and want; and her hardy and industrious race deserting her every day, and leaving her green fields a barren waste. All this must be attributed to her union with England. With this fact before our eyes, let us, in the name of everything that is good, retain that great boon which the mother country bequeathed upon us; and let us look to a kind Providence for better times.—Let the people stand firm together, and preserve the freedom and independence of their country; for this is not the work of party or of faction, but the united work of the country; and when a people become blended and inseparable, their power cannot be resisted, but must be acknowledged. Then before Newfoundland is committed, he (Mr. K.) trusted that no man would shrink from his duty, in supporting the just claims, and doing justice to the people. And the man that would, let him be branded as one unfit for the confidence of any constituency, and let him be scorned from power at the next general election; for the man would willingly barter away the liberties of his country for a mess of pottage, should not be tolerated. Then with his whole heart and soul he (Mr. K.) opposed Confederation, until the people are fully convinced that by entering into the scheme their interests would be promoted. And in going so far as to base his objections on the following reason:—Mrs. our queen and inland frontier

passes away for ever from our hands, and must be entirely placed under the control of the Federal Government, which would tend to destroy the prospects of our people; and should it suit the whim of the Federal Government, they would place such restrictions on our fishing population as would entirely cripple our great staple trade; and having no guarantee to the contrary, such restrictions might be imposed. Secondly,—the General Government will have the power of taxing to any amount our imports and exports, even our houses, lands, cattle, and all other property we possess, in order to raise a revenue, which would press heavily upon the people. The steam communication is named, but no guarantee is given for its being carried into effect. We have merely the promise of the existing government of Canada for its being carried out. The regulation of our trade and commerce would be under Federal control, and we knew full well, if the mercantile interests of this Island came in contact with those of G�ra, that ours would have to give way. That, in itself, was a great object on which had to go into Confederation. Our Lighthouses, buoys and beacons would be under the control of the Commissioners of the Federal Government; in fact every institution now under our own sole management would pass into Federal hands; and over them we would not be allowed