

for the union was effected by order of the King and Council; that, however, does not affect the argument. Where, then, was the charter that could not be broken? It was maintained by the Attorney General that the King and Council could not touch the charter—that it was irrevocable and must forever remain so; and yet in 1820 the King and Council annexed Cape Breton by their own act. Let any gentleman refer to the Journals of 1844, and he will find there that a special session of this House took place in the month of July, when the whole matter of the annexation of the Island was brought up by orders of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who wished delegates to be sent home to meet the representatives of Cape Breton when they went before the Privy Council. A petition had been sent to England from 2000 persons asking for repeal, and urging the unconstitutionality of the decree on the same grounds as those taken in this debate. If there is any strength in the argument now, how much greater ought its force to have been then, when the system of Government was swept away without the voice of the people or their representatives being heard. There was no House of Assembly or Legislature that could be appealed to. We have heard a good deal about the strong feeling pervading the country now, but I have been often told by men who were well acquainted with the state of the Island in 1820 that the feeling then was infinitely stronger. £1000 sterling was subscribed by a small population to send home delegates and engage counsel in England. The Privy Council then desired this Legislature to send an agent before them—not to discuss the propriety or judiciousness of annexing Cape Breton to Nova Scotia, because that branch of the argument was expressly excluded, but to discuss the *constitutionality of the Act*. Our Legislature declined to send agents, yet the question was elaborately discussed before that tribunal, in whose integrity the public had the most implicit faith, and within whose doors the breath of suspicion never entered. Did the Privy Council decide that the union was *unconstitutional*, and repeal their decree? No; but they sent back something like this message to the people of Cape Breton: “you have been united by the Act of the King and Council, and united you must remain.” United they have remained [fortunately for themselves, and it did take many years for the great feeling about repeal to dwindle out of existence.

Having said this much in reference to the charter, and having, as I think, shown that the acts of the King and Council have been universally recognized as controlling our affairs and annexing separate Legislatures, I think I have made a point which cannot easily be overcome. I will admit the truth of the proposition, that as the country progresses and the Government becomes more liberal and democratic, the Legislature should be consulted on subjects of this kind, but I cannot understand the allusions which some gentlemen have made to despatches which state that the Parliaments of the Provinces should be consulted. Those despatches have been spoken of, as though they contemplated an

appeal to the people. As I said before it is a doctrine unknown to the British constitution that we must go beyond the representatives of the people and go to the people themselves for the declaration of their will. However desirable such a principle may be it is not British, it is American in its inception and history; it never formed a part of our constitution, and I trust it never will. I come now to refer to the observations made by various members in this debate, and I must say, with all due respect for those who constitute this House, that if they could but divest their minds of the heat and prejudice which operate on them, they would see the impropriety of much that has been said in this debate. We have had a good many hard words used in nearly all the speeches from that of the hon. member for Londonderry down to that of the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Copeland) who spoke this afternoon. I have known the latter since I was a child, I am well aware that a more upright man Nova Scotia does not contain, and when I heard him in his quiet voice use the words “fraud, deceit, and treachery,” I felt that he had not measured his language. So stereotyped have those phrases become, that at last it seems impossible to discuss this question without using them. I will endeavor not to retaliate for the strong language that has been used, but I cannot help saying that such expressions are seldom employed in reference to anybody present or absent, and I do feel that there are some who would hardly have ventured to use such language if those to whom they applied it were here. To whom did they apply those words? I have under my hand a speech and pamphlet by a man, who, above all others, earned and retained the respect of the Conservative party; and I ask the Conservatives of this House—the men who from childhood have been taught to look up to James W. Johnston, if they are prepared to apply the terms “traitor” and “treachery” to him? If that old gentleman were here, even at his time of life, I would like to see the man who would get up and talk about fraud, deceit and treachery, and apply the terms to him. I was long opposed to that hon. gentleman. I know how to admire talent and patriotism even in an opponent. I should like to see the Attorney General tell him that he was a traitor. As long ago as 1854 Mr. Johnston made one of the finest speeches ever delivered on the floors of Parliament, and not content with that, after the publication of the Quebec scheme, when asked to give that speech for general publication, he endorsed every word he had ever uttered on the subject.

I cannot forbear reading to the House one or two sentences containing so much eloquence and pregnant with so much instruction, that I hope, before we hear the words which I referred to again repeated gentlemen will reflect on whom they are casting aspersions. In Cape Breton, when a Highlander curses and swears he is said to use “bad English.” We have had a good deal of “bad English” in this discussion, but far as I am concerned this violent language passes by me as the idle wind, which I regard not.