

CANADIAN CONFEDERATION.

INFORMATION IN RELATION TO PETITION OF NOVA SCOTIA DELEGATES.

HISTORICAL.

LORE DURHAM'S REPORT, 1839, recommended Legislative Union of the British North American Provinces, but strictly enjoined that it should be done with the free consent of all the Colonies, and that a Royal Commission should be sent out to arrange the terms and the basis of representation.

Although the question of Colonial Union had been more than once discussed in the Nova Scotia Legislature previous to 1861, the greatest possible difference of opinion was expressed by the several speakers: some preferring a Legislative, others a Federal Union, and one of them, Mr. Howe, advocated an Incorporation of the Colonies with the Mother Country, with representation in the Imperial Parliament; but no Resolution was moved or vote taken until the above year.

The scheme for confederating the Provinces *took its rise in Canada*, where, owing to dead locks in its Legislature, and frequent changes of administration, a Federal Union of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward's Island was suggested by the Canadian Government as the remedy for the internal dissensions of Canada.

The first Legislative action taken in Nova Scotia was in 1861, when the House of Assembly, without debate or division, authorized the appointment of a Delegation, to confer with Delegates from the other Provinces as to the expediency of a Legislative or Federal Union of the whole group, or a Union of the Maritime Provinces only, with a view to the question being "set at rest."

Delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick met the Executive Council of Canada, in September, 1862, when, after a brief conference, it was decided, without a dissentient voice, that until the projected Intercolonial Railroad was built, and free trade between the Provinces established, it would be premature to discuss the subject. And in this way the question was set at rest; *no one in the Nova Scotia Legislature objecting to the result of the Delegation.*

A general election came off in Nova Scotia in May, 1863, the chief issues before the country being a scheme of retrenchment, and a question in relation to the franchise, but it does not appear that in any instance the important subject of Colonial Union was brought to the notice of the Electors.

A new Provincial Government was formed in Nova Scotia immediately after the Elections, with Dr. Tupper as Premier, who, at the first meeting of Parliament, carried a Resolution authorizing the appointment of Delegates to consider, in conjunction with Delegates from New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island, the expediency of a Legislative Union of the three Maritime Provinces.

Early in the same year, after a succession of dead locks and changes of Administration, a Coalition Government was formed in Canada, charged with the policy of combining all the British North American Provinces in a *Federal*