

ject—an opinion that the period was fast approaching when these North American colonies must cast off their present political habiliments, and assume others more consistent with their advanced position, their surroundings, and their altered relations to the Empire. I was in favor of their political union before the subject was presented to the country in any tangible shape. I am in favor of it now, after having given the question much attention and thought, and after the bitter and prolonged agitation which it has produced in this Province. The first opinion I publicly expressed in favor of it was in the debate in this House on the resolution introduced in 1864 by the hon. Provincial Secretary, when I am correctly reported to have used the following language :—

“If the Resolution before the House contemplated a union of all the Provinces of British North America on equitable terms no one would hail it with more satisfaction than himself. Such a union he trusted at no distant period would become both a commercial and political necessity. He looked forward hopefully to the day when the inhabitants of these noble Provinces, united under one Government, might stand before the world in the proud national character of British Americans. From such an association they would indeed derive national strength and dignity worth some sacrifice to obtain. They would then possess a population and country whose immediate status and inevitable destiny would command respect. A union of the Maritime Provinces and the great territory beyond would give us a country extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with all the diversified resources necessary to the most unlimited material progress. In favor of such a proposal most of the arguments urged in this debate would have real point and force, and not appear, as they now did, absurd or inapplicable.”

From the above paragraph, Mr. Speaker, it will be seen, and indeed the fact is one of notoriety in this House, that before the Quebec scheme of Confederation was in existence, I had placed on record my decided approval of a union of British America on equitable terms. I think I will have no difficulty in showing that, though prominent in my opposition

to the Quebec scheme of Federation, I have always been favorable to the abstract idea of Union. My first appearance before the public in opposition to that scheme was at a mass meeting of the citizens of Halifax, in December, 1864, about nine months after the above declaration in Parliament; and although I spoke under circumstances of much irritation, I did not allow any personal annoyance to draw me into antagonism to the great principle of Colonial Union. Looking back, sir, to that occasion, and recollecting the excitement that marked it, I find no ordinary degree of satisfaction at the emphatic manner in which I preserved my consistency on the great principle involved in that discussion. I said :—

“I do not wish, Mr. Mayor, that my appearance on this platform to-night should be construed into opposition to a union of British America on fair terms. I am not opposed to, but, on the contrary, would support a union based on sound principles and equitable terms. I am not, however, willing to purchase Confederation on conditions disastrous to the people of Nova Scotia. These are the reasons why I oppose the measure by which Confederation is now sought to be secured. I cannot ratify the improvident bargain our delegates have made, because it is unjust to this Province. It is a bargain in which the advantages are all on one side, and all against us.”

I repeat, sir, when I look back to the period at which these remarks were uttered—when I remember the excitement and personal acrimony that marked, in some instances, the discussion of this subject in Temperance Hall—I am exceedingly gratified to-day that no temporary provocation could induce me to denounce all union, as others did, but that I wisely contented myself with hostility to the particular scheme then under consideration. I do not deny, that in the warmth of an exciting platform discussion I may have used language that in times of greater coolness I would not have uttered. But no candid man would think of binding another too strictly to every expression used before an excited popular