

of the most zealous and enlightened of the advocates of Confederation. The hon. and learned gentleman then proceeded to notice our *Island Cabinet* disagreement on the Confederation question; and, in doing so, argued that the existence of that disagreement evidenced no unworthiness or unfitness for his or their position on the part of any individual member or members of that Cabinet. The question of Confederation, on which they differed, being altogether an open one—a Question which, although it involved the interests of every class in the Colony, yet, most assuredly as parties now stand, could not be made a party one—every member of the Cabinet, as well as every member of the House, was, he said, perfectly free, without any regard to political position or party ties, to argue and vote for or against it, according to his own conscientious views of the question. In dwelling upon the fact of this Cabinet disagreement, the hon. and learned gentleman adverted to similar divisions which at different times, had arisen in the Cabinet of Great Britain; instancing amongst others, that which took place in the reign of George the Third, when the great Pitt was Premier; and also the misunderstanding between King William the Fourth and his prime minister, Lord Melbourne, in consequence of which His Majesty intimated to his Lordship, although sustained by a parliamentary majority, that he had no further need of his services, and was yet obliged afterwards to recall him. The hon. and learned gentleman's object, in referring to these historical incidents, was to shew that such differences might arise and exist between members of the same Cabinet, and such misunderstandings occur, even between the supreme head of the Government and his Executive, without their necessitating any just condemnation of either of the disagreeing parties; as, in such cases, the disagreement might, and, perhaps, generally did, arise solely from an adherence, on each side, to the most conscientious convictions, or the most sincere desire for the preservation or promotion of the public welfare. And, in particularly addressing some of his observations on that subject to "his hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition" (Mr. Coles), the hon. and learned gentlemen took occasion to observe that the day which had unfortunately seen honest and hearty opponents in the political arena, veritable and undisguised enemies in private life, was happily gone by; and congratulated that hon. gentleman and himself that now, however great the hostility which, on the floor of the Assembly, each might manifest to the public policy and political sentiments of the other, they could, at all times, meet as true friends both in the social haunts and in the private walks of life. In countries in which self-government did not prevail, political contests seldom failed to provoke the most rancorous illwill, and to give rise to the most uncharitable asperities; but where that form of government is established its happy operation, in equalizing both burthens and privileges, and in holding the balance even between contending aspirants for place and power had a most salutary weight in the repression of jealousy and ill-will; and its influences, where they had long been felt, seldom failed to induce the practice of forbearance and courtesy in parliamentary debates.—The hon. and learned gentleman then observed, that, in giving his support to the Resolutions in amendment, which had been submitted by the hon. member for St. Peter's (Hon. Mr. Whelan,) he did not think it neces-

sary to dilate upon the Quebec Scheme, or to advert with any particularity to what had taken place at the Quebec Conference; for all that he could say upon those topics he had said in the Session of 1865, and it was duly recorded in the *Parliamentary Reporter* of that year. Indeed he feared he had already trespassed too far on the time and patience of the House by iteration of much that he had formerly spoken upon the same question; but his apology was, that, as he still adhered to the sentiments respecting Confederation which he had formerly uttered, he had no choice between such iteration and his preserving a silence, which in the position which he occupied, might justly have been deemed both disrespectful and unwarrantable. He was certainly very sorry to feel himself obliged to vote against the Resolutions which had been submitted by the Hon. the Leader of the Government (Mr. J. C. Pope); but, at the same time, he could not refrain from saying he was extremely astonished that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a declaration such as that which they contained could be deliberately submitted to "the collective wisdom" of the country—a declaration by which, should the House accept it, they would dare to presume upon an exercise of the divine attributes of prescience and omniscience. He was indeed sorry to find that hon. members on the Government side of the House, and on the independent benches, were, however, prepared to accept and declare any thing, rather than, in any way, admit the principle of Confederation. He was himself, however, prepared to vote for the Resolutions in amendment, submitted by the hon. member for St. Peter's; and how the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Coles), with any regard to his reputation for political consistency—not to say honesty—could do otherwise, he (Hon. Mr. H.) could not imagine. If, when at Ottawa, he (the Hon. Mr. Coles) spoke conscientiously, he could not now, with any shew of consistency, vote for the Resolutions submitted by the Hon. the Leader of the Government; nay, as it might justly be said that, at Ottawa, he spoke with ten-fold more strength than any other of the *Island Delegates*, in favour of the Resolutions adopted at the Quebec Conference, to be consistent, he ought to oppose the Resolutions now submitted against Confederation with ten times greater energy than any other hon. member who is opposed to them. He like the Hon. Joseph Howe, had declared that the Confederation of the British American Provinces had been, if not the cherished dream of his childhood, yet a cherished conception of his own mind, the realization of which he had contemplated for years. How now then, when its realization certainly seemed more than a probability, could he, not only abandon the hopes of it, but actually do all that laid in his power to prevent it?—Once more, with contemptuous indignation, adverted to, and repelling, the charges of bribery and corruption, which, on account of his advocacy of Confederation, had been levelled against himself, the hon. and learned gentleman took occasion to say, that there was not a public man in Prince Edward Island who had devoted himself to the public service of his country in a manner which exhibited less consideration of self, than he had done. It could not be said that he had ever fattened or luxuriated upon the sweets of office. Long as he had faithfully adhered to the principles and fortunes of the Conservative party,—alike when in power and out of power,