

in the condition that the old thirteen colonies were in under King George III. We have a very different person to deal with in Queen Victoria. We have to approach ministers very different from those of the last century. We have no stubborn King George III.; we have no prejudices of the royal mind to counteract; we have not the infatuation of his ministers to meet. We have the greatest princess that ever adorned a human throne, a most virtuous Queen, who, when she accepted the sceptre, took an oath that she would rule the country according to the laws, customs and statutes of the realm. She has most nobly fulfilled her obligations, and, in answer to the prayers of her own church, "has been most plenteously endowed with heavenly gifts." In her person she is an example of every virtue; her obedience to the laws exalts her above all other monarchs. Her personal virtues are brighter than all the gems which adorn her Imperial diadem. It is to a Queen like this that the people appeal. Have the people no right to present themselves before their Sovereign? Has not this ever been the most loyal portion of her dominions. Did not our forefathers flee from their country because they would not participate in rebellion? Did they not leave their property for their king's sake? I have seen a resolution passed by the Legislature of Nova Scotia at the time the thirteen colonies rebelled actually petitioning the King to impose taxes upon the Province to assist the Empire in its extremity. From that time to this the people of Nova Scotia have been the most loyal that ever dwelt in any part of Her Majesty's dominions. They will have confidence in presenting themselves before the Queen, and asking to be restored—to what? To any thing that they have no right to demand? Simply to their own. Can any man suppose for a moment that they will be rejected by a Sovereign like ours? We need be under no apprehension. We are pursuing the proper course to obtain a legitimate end, and there is no power on earth that can prevent the people from being restored to their rights but downright tyranny, and that we cannot expect from the hands of the Queen and her Government. Do not let the loyalty of Nova Scotia be suspected. Has any one a right to suspect it! Look at the injuries done to the people of this Province within the last six months. See their liberties taken away; see them taxed by a foreign and alien Legislature; see their property taken from them; all their customs handed over to others, collected by strangers before their very eyes. See stamp duties and tea duties imposed upon them. Those very acts which forced the old thirteen colonies to rebellion have been imposed upon Nova Scotia with the same extraordinary fatuity. And yet have the people rebelled? I have heard of no movement of agitation on the part of the people beyond the simple burning in effigy of one of the delegates. If that delegate had belonged to the United States, instead of being burned in effigy, he would have been burned in reality. If men commissioned by any State in the American Union to negotiate any arrangement affecting the constitution returned with such a bargain as these men returned with, they would not have been permitted to live. The slow process of justice would not have been extended to them, but that has not been the case in Nova Scotia. This law-respecting people have made no movement, but they are going to submit no longer. The time for forbearance is at an end. They had no means of constitutionally speaking until now, and they intend to make use of it. If it should be unsuccessful, I may be asked what will be the consequence? I am hardly going to anticipate that the appeal of the people can be unsuccessful. I deny the possibility of failure, but then I assert on the behalf of the people as long as the Queen of England extends to the people of Nova Scotia her protection so long will the people refuse to withdraw their allegiance. So long as they are protected they will be loyal and faithful; and, sir, let it happen that the Queen of England and her ministers in Parliament, regardless of the past, regardless of the loss of the old colonies, shall determine to trample on the rights and liberties of this country; if they should do so, then it will indeed be a dark and gloomy hour. Sir, when by the decrees of inexorable fate the flag of England and the name of Englishmen shall be taken away from the people of Nova Scotia, and the flag and name of any other country substituted, then I prophesy that this Province will be turned into a house of mourning, and every eye will shed hot burning tears of bitter regret and inexpressible woe.

Now, having made these preliminary remarks, I shall call your attention to the history of our Constitution. I have heard men assert that we have no valid constitution—that it is made up of despatches. I have been at the pains of examining into this question, and can show you that Nova Scotia has had a chartered constitution, an irrevocable constitution—one that no power on earth can take away except by force or violence. Neither the Queen nor Parliament of England has any right to touch or abrogate that constitution. This country was originally known by the name of Acadia, and was in the possession of the French at one time, and in that of the English at another—was long, in fact, debateable ground. The French at last made the settlement of Port Royal, at present called Annapolis. They fortified it in the early part of the 18th century; but an expedition was fitted out by a person of the name of Nicholson, from Boston, who came over and forced the French garrison to capitulate. Consequently the Province was at this time conquered by the British. In 1713, soon after the conquest, by the