

old Liberal leaders of the great Reform party of Nova Scotia who lives to-day is my warm personal friend and my strong political supporter. And more, Sir, in the year 1855, one of the most intelligent and independent counties to be found in the wide domain of Canada—the county where I was born and where I am best known—elected me as its representative, and down to this hour, during nearly twenty-seven years, that county has given me its invariable and unqualified support, while these hon. gentlemen have been dismissed, contemptuously dismissed, from the seats which they held. They have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. They have gone about like Japhet in search of his father, looking for other constituencies to be bribed into electing them, while I have had the distinguished honor of having, in the county where I was born and best known, the unqualified, independent support of the electors for nearly twenty-seven years. These hon. gentlemen talked about the Pictou Railway, and they talked for six weeks about the Canadian Pacific Railway contract, in vain; but no, not in vain, for it had the effect of their being unable even to hold their own supporters together in this House or out of it. The reason they talk of the Pictou Railway is that they suppose they are best able to assail me on matters with which this House may not be very familiar. But they should not forget that on this floor one of their own colleagues, an able man, Mr. Jones, of Halifax, fought that question out to the bitter end with me—discussed it in all its bearings in their presence here—and with what result? With the result that when we went back to Nova Scotia, when the battle was ended, it was found that Mr. Jones was dismissed by his constituency, the large metropolitan constituency of Halifax, while I came back associated with fifteen supporters from Nova Scotia instead of five, which was all I had when the battle began. They should not forget that in the county of Pictou, where there was some feeling in relation to this matter at one time, I went down last summer at the solicitation of my friends there, and led our forces to the attack, and, after I had been confronted by all that could be said or done where the matter was best known, the independent electors of that great constituency of Pictou elected, as their representative in this House, a gentleman who had been unknown before in political life, in opposition to the popular and talented Mr. Carmichael who was long its representative. I give these facts as evidence that these gentlemen have failed in Nova Scotia, utterly and completely, to excite any antagonism to myself, or to prejudice the proud, the triumphant, the distinguished position I occupy as a representative of that Province: and they will be regarded as unworthy the position they occupy if they venture to go back to the events of 1866 in order to attack me. I defy them to challenge my conduct as a public Minister and a public man in relation to the events known in this House and in this country. Now, Sir, I may say, in reference to my friend Mr. McLelan, it was a source of just pride to me to find my old and bitter opponent for many years, Joseph Howe, on my side. It is a source of pride and satisfaction for me to know that having taken a straightforward course from the commencement, old opponents who had opposed me with great zeal on the Reform side in Nova Scotia could sit down in the Cabinet of the country with me when the time came for the public interests to require it. The course pursued by the pseudo-Reformers of Canada, the insincerity they exhibited, drove both Mr. McLelan and Mr. Howe from their ranks, and it is equally a source of great satisfaction to me to know that we have been able to meet on common ground, and discharge those duties imposed upon us in relation to the public interests of the country. Mr. Archibald has been referred to; but long after the circumstances to which allusion is made the hon. gentleman who referred to him knew that he (Mr. Archibald) had himself stated over his own signature, that he had never for a single

moment ventured to impute to me anything dishonorable as a man in any sense of the word. That hon. gentleman knows right well that the very fact of the association of these hon. gentlemen from Nova Scotia with myself, gives to the world, in the clearest and most distinct terms, evidence that they believe me worthy of their confidence as well as the confidence of the public. But, Sir, from whom come these charges of inconsistency? Who are the men, who, in this period of the nineteenth century, venture on the floor of this House to talk of inconsistency because public men who have been in strong and bitter party antagonism are found combining together in the public interest? Do these charges come from gentlemen in a position to throw the first stone? Do they forget that the man held up to public execration by themselves and their press, who was denounced from one end of the country to the other, was received by them with open arms and all his offences forgotten the moment he was ready to become their associate? Do not they know that if ever any body of men took liberties with public consistency, they are the men who have done so whenever their interests required it? They are men who, having failed to obtain the confidence of the people of this country, never scrupled to combine with any person, no matter how violently they had traduced or assaulted him. They must take either one horn of the dilemma or the other; either they are ready to associate with any man however black his record, or they convict themselves of having, for personal or party purposes, denounced any gentleman who happened for the time to be opposed to them. But, Sir, I am not surprised that, smarting with defeat as they are, having tried their power in the House and found it *nil*, and having gone outside perambulating the country to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west, they come back, not to deal with the public interests of the country or to do the business before the House, but to vent the bitter spleen from which they suffer in consequence of their defeats. I congratulate the hon. gentleman who has opened this attack to-day on the courage which he shows at this late hour. I am glad that, having in vain, from the hour that the House took recess last year, when the hon. gentleman undertook to challenge the confidence of the country in the Government—having from that hour to this been unable to bring that hon. gentleman to bay, unable to get him to screw his courage up to the sticking point, so as to enable him to meet me in fair and open public discussion on a public platform, to deal with these questions—I say I congratulate him that he has managed to screw up his courage so as, out of the files of his party organ, to confront me with an event which occurred in Nova Scotia in 1866. I congratulate the hon. gentleman on his great courage; but, Sir, I can tell him that no man so degraded himself in order to gain power as he did in Ontario. I tell him that he must stand convicted before the people of this country—and it is known everywhere that no man ever so degraded himself in order to obtain power as that hon. gentleman degraded himself in buying out one of the Ministers of a Government to which he was opposed. So long as that hon. gentleman lives he will have to meet the words: “Speak now.” I say that he would give anything in his possession to wipe out the recollection of those words, which convicted him as a public man of forgetting, not merely what was due from one public man to another, but what was due from one gentleman to another, when he went to one of the members of the Ministry to which he was opposed, and made a corrupt arrangement which was afterwards rewarded by one of the highest judicial positions in this country—an arrangement, I say, for the most corrupt and dishonorable purpose by which one man could obtain the services of another. In conclusion I tell the hon. gentleman that here now, on this question, or any other connected with the public affairs