

discharge the public services without Confederation, and I now ask members to look at that matter. I will not make an elaborate calculation, but I ask the House to consider the facts set out in the resolution. That while our debt two or three years ago was but four or five millions, it now amounts to eight and a half millions, and, according to some, nine millions. If it be a fact that we were about having to provide interest on our additional debt of so large an amount, I ask where was the money to come from? \$240,000 was the smallest sum which *must* have been provided annually after the 1st of July for that purpose. Will any man tell us that we were able to take that sum from our annual revenue, and still provide as we had been doing for our roads and bridges and other services? It was impossible. "But," says the hon. member for Kings, "we had been growing at such a rate for the last ten years that if our progress were the same we could have met these liabilities." It is easy to look back and easy to prophesy, but if he had looked more carefully and gone to the proper authorities he would have found the fact standing out patent that the revenues of last year down to the present time were \$130,000 less than at the corresponding period of the previous year. This sum, added to the amount of interest which I stated, makes \$370,000 to be provided for. And yet we are told that before Confederation Nova Scotia was a happy country, and could carry on her public works without increasing the taxation. I could not help feeling amused at hearing one gentleman talk about Nova Scotia, being economical, and keeping within her income. When we doubled our debt within five or six years, surely we should not talk about keeping within our income. I undertake to say at any rate that our debt is double what it was eight years ago, and yet it is said that Canada is a most extravagant country, while Nova Scotia is a tight little place that manages its affairs differently. When I said \$130,000 was the deficiency, I should have given the exact figures which are \$127,373 27 to 1st September last.

Before going into a reply to the speeches of the hon. member let me ask one or two questions. The resolutions laid on the table state boldly that our revenues are in such a condition that we are unable to meet the public requirements. Yet what did we hear stated the other day? That the accounts were in such a state of confusion that the Government, acknowledging themselves incompetent for the task of arranging them, were obliged to call in the assistance of three gentlemen from outside. Those accountants were put to work three or four months ago, and I ask why it is that, though the House has been three weeks in session, although the country has been looking for alarming disclosures about peculations on the part of the late Government, at this moment we are still without the result of their investigations. I am unable to account for it; perhaps the Government can,—but these Commissioners should at least have given a preliminary report. A committee of this House was appointed some time since to investigate the public accounts, but they have not held

one meeting up to this hour. If the statements made by the Government be true, why has not the proof been laid before us either by the report of the accountants or the report of our own committee? I can imagine a reason—it may be that when the report comes up it will be found that we have money enough and to spare. If this be not the case why are delegates to be sent home to say to the British Government that this country is not in a condition to carry on its public works at a time when we have no report from the Commissioners or from the Committee of this House? If the statement be true, it is within the power of the Government to prove it. If the accountants have not been able to exercise due diligence in their work who has been hindering them? Is the Government doing so? Have these gentlemen been supplied with the information necessary to the completion of the work? No, sir; to my knowledge information has not been applied for at the very quarters where it could be derived, and therefore the Government are not in a position to say what is the condition of our finances. When they put into the mouths of members, for the purpose of sending it to England, the statement that we are not able to carry on the public affairs, why did they not lay the proof on the table?

I come now to my reply to hon. members, and I find that the first gentleman who favored me with his notice was my hon. friend from Londonderry, who gave us *his views*! of the constitutional law bearing on the subject. This is not the first occasion on which I have heard of the hon. member's constitutional law; he seemed to think once upon a time that no one but himself was a match for Mr. Johnston—no one would so readily approach the lion in his den, and catch him by the beard, as he. He told us once that he could make a better collection of Revised Statutes in a week than all the rest of us put together. How often have we listened in times gone by to the constitutional law which I, "the member for Colchester," proclaimed to the country. He used to say, in substance, "do not take your law from Johnston or Young; I, the great man from Colchester, will tell you what the law is, and let no one dare dispute it."

In that strain he used to address the House, and now, coming down from greater game, he has turned his artillery upon me, and has told the people that I knew nothing about constitutional law, and that I had a great deal of audacity to talk of it in his presence. He asks us to consider the precedents set in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, where an appeal was made to the electors. I did not say that there was to be no appeal to the people when the government could not carry on the affairs, but I said that when the government could carry its measures through the legislature, no man had ever heard of a dissolution being required. That was the state of affairs in New Brunswick when the question was mooted; the government disagreed on the subject, and there was no alternative but to appeal to the people in order to settle the question. But was there an appeal on this question in Prince Edward Island? Not at all; they had their election there at