

SPEECHES

Delivered in the Legislative Council, New Brunswick, on Confederation and the Resignation of the Government, and Correspondence connected therewith.

FREDERICTON, April 4, 1866.

CONFEDERATION.

Hon. Mr. BOTSFORD moved that the House be put into Committee of the whole, in consideration of His Excellency's Speech at the opening of the Session. The motion prevailed; and hon. Mr. Seeley took the Chair, and by request read the paragraph in His Excellency's Speech, as follows:—

"I have received Her Majesty's commands to communicate to you a Correspondence on the affairs of British North America, which has taken place between Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor General of Canada; and I am further directed to express to you the strong and deliberate opinion of Her Majesty's Government, that it is an object much to be desired, that all the British North American Colonies should agree to unite in one Government. These papers will immediately be laid before you."

Hon. Mr. BOTSFORD—I rise your honors, fully impressed with a sense of the importance of the subject, a discussion of which I am about to initiate, and of my own inability to do it that justice which I could wish, or that it deserves. Before I proceed to state my reasons for believing that an union of the North American Colonies is desirable, I wish to refer to a few arguments that have been used for the purpose of affecting the minds of hon. members. It has been stated that this is not the proper branch in which first to discuss the question of Confederation, and from that proposition I most entirely dissent. An independent branch of the Legislature, we have the undoubted right to express our opinion upon any and every subject affecting the vital interests of the

Province, and by abstaining from such course, we would forego one of our most important constitutional privileges. And we have the right to lead, if necessary, public opinion. Entertaining such views, I am desirous that this subject here should have a calm and dispassionate discussion. Imputations have been cast upon the reasons by which a majority of hon. members are actuated, with regard to this subject of union, and motives of a mercenary character have been urged as influencing this Body in arriving at conclusions upon it. I am free to confess, that union of the Provinces has been one of the political aspirations of my life, and, in view of its probable accomplishment, I can afford to treat with perfect indifference such aspersions as I have alluded to, no matter from whence they come. I am proud of this opportunity of giving some reasons for "the faith that is in me," although I feel as if I am a mere skirmisher in the attack upon the fallacies of those who oppose union, and must depend upon gentlemen who come after me to advance the weightier arguments in favor of the resolutions I intend to submit. Still, I should not be doing my duty did I not express my views, although not with the expectation of influencing the conclusions of your honors, because I know you have all given due attention to the important matter. First—what is the present position of New Brunswick, and how stands her relations with other Provinces and States, so far as affects her commerce, the development of her industrial resources, and her advancement in material and social prosperity?

Admitting that we have all these Constitutional privileges under the existence of British institutions which a free people ought to possess, the question presents itself to the