

but if he could not get that, then he would propose this:—

"By a Federal Union of the Colonies we should have something like the neighboring republic; and if I saw nothing better, I should say at once, let us keep our local Legislatures, and have a President and central Congress for all the higher and more external relations of the united Provinces. \* \* \* Under a Federal Union we should form a large and prosperous nation, lying between the other two branches of the British family, and our duty would evidently be to keep them both at peace."

Now I ask the hon. member opposite if with these documents published to the world under his own signature he is still ready to tell the people of Nova Scotia that Mr Howe has never advocated a Federal Union of the Provinces.

But the hon. member for North Colchester (Mr McLelan) undertook to prove to this House the extraordinary proposition that, when Mr. Howe, as a public man, moved a resolution in this Legislature declaring that so great were the advantages of Union between this Province and Canada, that he asked for authority to hold a conference on the subject, all he really desired was to get rid of the question altogether—that at the conference the matter was found entirely impracticable, and was accordingly set at rest as it was intended to be. I have heard a good many extraordinary statements fall from the mouths of gentlemen, but when the hon. member tells you that a public man would pursue such a deceitful course, then he has placed the person whom he professes to follow in a position so abject as to excite the pity and contempt of every respectable and intelligent man. But I have under my hand that which will give their refutation of the charge which the hon. member has brought against Mr. Howe. When Mr. Howe propounded this resolution he believed in it, and was sincere if ever a public man was in relation to any measure. After this conference was held in Canada what do we find? At Fort Robinson, he addressed a large body of Canadians, and among other things said:

"He looked forward hopefully to the time when the great Provinces of Canada would be connected with the Provinces below, and when a man would feel that to be a British American was to be the citizen of a country which included all those fertile lands; all those inexhaustible fisheries, all this immense marine,—carrying to all seas the flag of Old England, if they would let us; if not, the flag of British America."

Can the hon. member for North Colchester, when he hears such language as that, still assert that Mr. Howe was desirous of defeating Union? In that speech from which I have quoted we find him eloquently and forcibly urging the same view he had so often previously advocated with all the energy and talents he possessed.

The hon. member for Yarmouth made an observation yesterday which I forgot to notice at the time. He said that no person in this country desired this union of the colonies except a few politicians who wanted office. I have given the House some evidence in dealing not only with this, but other public questions, that I have

a higher ambition than of consulting my own individual interest or of holding office. So far from looking upon this question in this light, from the first hour I felt it my duty to deal with it I have reposed that trust and confidence in the people which I felt they deserved at my hands. I have put my hands to this work, not with the conviction that it was a question upon which a Minister should peril any majority he might have by a reckless procedure—that he should make an unnecessary and unconstitutional appeal to the people. I have never said that the influences of party passions and prejudices, and the introduction of other questions which are inseparable from an appeal to the people, might not jeopardize this question if submitted hastily to the country; but at the same time I have felt that this question, discussed as it has been down to a recent period by all classes and parties, has taken a deep hold upon the public sentiment—that the public opinion of the country had always been in favor of this measure. Instead of seeking office for myself—instead of looking forward to an escape from the verdict of the people at the polls, there is nothing I shall await with greater pride than having accomplished this union by the aid of my own colleagues and the patriotic gentlemen who have regarded patriotism more highly than partizanship—there is nothing that will give me greater pleasure than to place myself, my public character, and my future career in the hands of the electors of Nova Scotia. I have no hesitation in saying that there is no position, however exalted, that would prevent me for a single instant, asking that verdict from the people which I have a right to demand at their hands. (Cheers)

The system of government for British America is the system that now prevails in this Province; it is the responsible system by which we can only retain office by the continuance of public confidence. When did I ever shrink from ascertaining the opinions of my fellow countrymen? I am unwilling to make a rash and irrational appeal to the people at the polls; but when I came back from Canada—having previously to the general election committed myself to this question of Confederation—having obtained the most cordial approval of the sentiments which I entertained—the first thing I did was to court public discussion. At the first moment at Charlottetown it was decided we should take up this question, a public meeting was held at which we proclaimed at once what our intentions were. I brought the Canada, New Brunswick and P. E. Island delegates to this city, and instead of concealing our views from the world, at a table, surrounded by the leading men of every profession in the community, we stated freely to the people of the Province and of British America the whole scheme which we proposed to carry out.—As far as could be judged, the sentiments of the leading merchants and others were unanimously in favour of the question when it was laid before them. When it was stated that there was a probability of accomplishing the union loud cheers rang through the hall.