

the United States succeed in restoring the union, in healing the differences between the North and the South, and in concentrating their tremendous energies, she must become one of the greatest powers of the world. She is now a great naval power, but give her the harbour of Halifax,—which in her hands could be made just as impregnable as Gibraltar. Give her the coal, iron, and fisheries of Nova Scotia, and her power will be largely increased, and millions of people will pour into this country. The fisheries alone of these provinces would be to the United States a nursery for a million or a million and a half of seamen. How long would England then boast of her maritime supremacy? When the Americans had only a few miserable clips they brought more disgrace upon the British flag than any other nation ever succeeded in doing. What would they be if, when challenged to the test by Great Britain, they had possession of the Colonies in addition to their ordinary strength? Suppose in the order of things France, another great naval power, should combine her energies with those of the United States, against England, in what position would the mother country be? How could she contend with such maritime nations as these? Therefore the loss of these Colonies might lead to the degradation of England, and instead of standing at the head of nations she might be lowered to the condition of a secondary state, if indeed she were not converted into a province of France.

I shall now very briefly call the attention of the House to the resolutions before it. They develop the arguments on which we ask for a repeal of the Union. The first clause contends that the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia had no power to change the constitution; they had none except what was given them in the charter. Parliament had no power over this country—it never had any. This country belonged to the Queen of England, and our Assembly had no constitutional right to consent to or make the slightest alteration in the constitution under which they were elected to make laws. That is the position which we take, and I would like to see the British constitutional authorities examine this subject, for I am convinced they will acknowledge that I am correct. The second resolution is to the effect that the only authority which the Delegates had was derived from the Assembly, who had no power to give any such authority at all. Even this authority, however, they disregarded. Their authority simply extended to the negotiation of the terms of a Federal union between all the British North American Colonies. They had no power to select three provinces and confederate them, and therefore in that respect they did not act up to their authority. Then, sir, their delegation was not legally constituted. If I gave a power of Attorney to A. B. and C. to transact business for me, A. and B. cannot do it without C., unless I make it optional for them to do it jointly or severally; but if I authorize three men jointly to execute a deed for me, or do any other act, any two of them cannot legally perform the duty. If the House of Assembly authorized a delegation to be constituted, consisting of an equal number of men from Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, the delegates had no power to act unless this stipulation was carried out. No constituent assembly was constituted—it could make no constitution, or do any act until all the Delegates were present. If there were 5 from one province and 6 from another, the whole proceeding was a nullity, because the delegation was not constituted according to their instructions. Then again they were told that they were to make just provision for the rights and interests of Nova Scotia. How did they do that? They gave the whole province away. We had a well-working constitution; we made our own laws, raised our own revenues, and taxed ourselves. We owned railways, fisheries and other public property but they gave them all away for nothing. We can at any moment be taxed to any extent arbitrarily by an oligarchy in Canada.

The sixth resolution states that no change can be made without an appeal to the people. Here is a self-evident proposition. The constitution belongs to whom? To the House of Assembly? No. To the Legislative Council? No. It is the property of the people of Nova Scotia—every man, woman and child are the owners, and it cannot be taken away from them without their consent. Even the arbitrary monarchies of Europe admit that principle. When Napoleon seized upon the Empire what did he do? At all events he went through the ceremony of sending around the ballot box, and asking the people whether they were willing to change their constitution. The other day two States of Italy, Nice and Savoy, were transferred after the Austrian campaign, and what was done? Did one king sit down and cede the country to the other? No; the people were called upon to decide whether they were prepared to accept the change of constitution or not. No constitution can be lawfully and constitutionally taken away without consulting the people who own the constitution. This is a self-evident proposition—just as evident as the fact that no man can have his farm taken away from him without his consent.

These resolutions go on to argue that the people of Nova Scotia were never consulted until the 18th September, 1867, after the British North America Act had passed the Parliament, and the Queen had given it force by her proclamation. They were then for the first time asked whether they were willing to accept the change of constitution. Then did the people answer emphatically that they would have nothing to do with it. These resolutions state that the preamble of the Imperial Statute is false, and I believe that when the Quebec scheme went home no such words were in it. But no sooner did the crown officers cast their eyes over it than they, knowing the constitutional course in all such mat-