

last, as far as it has yet gone, no new thing has been offered or suggested. The programme of Confederation stands now exactly as it was presented in a *quasi* private form to the representatives of the people of this country some four months ago. The promoters of the scheme have added nothing to, taken nothing from the original bill of fare, and they have as good as told us, frankly and squarely, that they would add nothing to, take nothing from it if they could. The opponents of the project on the other hand, while giving it a sweeping condemnation, offer nothing, suggest nothing to replace that which they so summarily reject. Nothing is easier than to find fault with other men's work; it is a talent that we all possess, and that few of us ever think to hide under a bushel. For myself, though in favor of the scheme, being equally at a loss with other honorable members to say anything new upon it, I, too, will have to turn to my fault-finding instincts in the first instance. The honorable member for Montreal Centre (Hon. Mr. ROSE) has said in his able speech that if we could not improve on the project, we should forbear to find fault with it. I do not agree with him. On the contrary, I conceive that even though approving of the resolutions as a whole, it is the duty of members speaking to the question to point out and place on record the faults that strike them as likely to require correction by and by. And first of all—coming to discuss Confederation from my own standpoint—I would say that I have long looked forward to the time when the whole of the British North American Provinces would be united under one stable government; believing, as I always have believed ever since I came to know this country well, that we possess all the elements, in natural resources and endowments, and in distinctive geographical position, to form the ground-work of a power on this continent. I feared, nevertheless, when the project was foreshadowed here last year, that the time was not yet full for bringing about the desired combination. I feared that the almost total separation, political and social, which had heretofore existed between ourselves and the provinces below, might possibly cause a premature union to result in permanent estrangement. It appeared to me that we should first have cultivated social and commercial relations with our kindred on the seaboard before uniting, for better for worse, in a political alliance. These were the views which I took

of the Confederation project when it was so suddenly sprung upon us at the close of last session; and I confess that I still entertain grave apprehensions that we may be about to come together upon too short an acquaintance, before we have an opportunity of knowing one another, and learning to adapt ourselves the one to the other. In this consists my broad and general objection, not to the principle of Confederation, but to the hastiness with which it is sought to be carried out—threatening, as I fear, to mar our destiny in striving to overtake it. To the details of the scheme itself I hold one strong and marked objection, which I desire to record, though I know that this is not the time or place for remedying defective details. I allude to the Federal feature of the project. I own to a rooted dislike, if not to the Federal principle or Federal theory, at all events to the practical results of the working of the system; and neither the warm eulogium which the Hon. President of the Council (Hon. Mr. BROWN) has passed upon the system as illustrated by its working in the United States, nor the milder defence of the system pronounced by my hon. friend the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. MCGEE), has served to clothe it in other than most distasteful colors in my sight. However the Federal system of government may have tended to promote the material growth of the United States—and it would not be safe to assert that such a country, with such a people, would have failed to attain to early greatness under any form of free government—however, I repeat, the Federal form of government may have promoted the material progress of the United States, it does not seem to me to have elevated, politically speaking at all events, the moral standard of the people of the United States. One most marked and evil result of the system has been to produce politicians rather than statesmen—swarms of the former to a very limited proportion of the latter; and I would much fear, if we are to see Canada redivided, that the petty parliaments of the separated provinces will prove to be but preparatory schools for that class of politicians who take to politics as to a trade, and whose after-presence in the greater Assembly—to which they would all aspire—would serve to depress the standard of political worth, to lower the tone of political morality, which we might hope to see prevail in a Confederated Parliament of British North America under a purely legis-