

one after another. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) It is because these honorable gentlemen have not endeavored honestly and candidly to discuss the question, but have played the game of prolonging the debate to midsummer and preventing the House coming to a final decision upon it, that the Government have taken the step now proposed, and have said to these hon. gentlemen: "Here, you have had a month to move amendments and make speeches. You have been allowed to sit here discussing the question every night during that time, and sometimes till one or two o'clock in the morning. You have not fairly discussed the scheme, nor moved any amendments to it. You appear, on the contrary, determined to obstruct the measure by every means in your power. You have deliberately laid a plot to throw it back with the view of defeating it in this underhand manner. We are not going to allow that, nor should be worthy of the position we hold as a Government if we did allow it;" and, sir, I should be unworthy of the character the hon. gentleman (Hon. Mr. HOLTON) gives me of being a good parliamentary strategist, if I allowed this plot of preventing the House coming to a vote to succeed. (Hear, hear.) Now, in resorting to measures to prevent the success of this game played by the Opposition, we have not taken hon. gentlemen opposite or the House by surprise. We gave them from the middle of winter almost to the beginning of spring, and the opening of navigation, to discuss the question and propose amendments; and when we saw they were determined to waste the time of the House and country indefinitely, I came down yesterday and, on behalf of the Government and with the full approbation of my colleagues, stated fairly and frankly that it was of the greatest consequence, the utmost consequence, to the best interests of this country, that this question should not be allowed to drag on before Parliament, but that a vote should be taken without delay, in order that we might be able to tell the sister provinces and inform Her Majesty that the contract we made with them, the arrangement we entered into with the governments of those provinces, had met the full approbation and consent of the Parliament and people of Canada. (Hear, hear.) And I gave fair notice that the Government considered the recent political events in New Brunswick, and the state of affairs in that province, called not

only for action, but prompt action by this House; and that every proper and legitimate means known to parliamentary practice would be taken by the Government for the purpose of getting this House to come to a full and final decision upon the question. (Hear, hear.) We have never taken hon. gentlemen by surprise. On the contrary, we have allowed them every latitude in this debate, and have given them fair notice all through of what we intended to do. But how have we been met by them? Have we been met in the same spirit of frankness and sincerity? No—and I say it without hesitation, we have been met throughout in a spirit of obstruction and hostility; and, instead of discussing the question fairly on its merits, hon. gentlemen opposite are dragging on the debate slowly for months, in order to tire out the patience of the House and country. (Hear, hear.) I ask the House whether they will permit such a shabby, such a miserable game to be played successfully? Will they allow a question so closely identified with the best interests of Canada to be thrown across the floor of the House like a battle-dore between the hon. members for Cornwall and Chateaugay? Will they allow these hon. gentlemen to trifle with it, not so much because they are opposed to the scheme itself or disapprove of its general principles, as because of those by whom it is presented for the adoption of the House. (Hear, hear.) Sir, there has been some little misapprehension as to the effect of the motion I have proposed to the House, which it is as well should be removed. It has simply and only this effect—that it does not prevent hon. members expressing their views fully and freely upon the subject, but calls upon every hon. gentleman to give—if I may use an Americanism—a straight and square vote upon the question, and to state plainly whether or not he approves of the scheme of Confederation as a whole. (Hear, hear.) As I stated when I opened this debate upon my motion, and as has been over and over again stated by several of my colleagues, we agreed with the governments of the sister provinces upon a future Constitution for the whole of British North America, and we ask this House to approve or disapprove of that Constitution. We told the House that we had made this treaty with the sanction of Her Majesty and of the Imperial Government.