

MR. MCGIVERIN—As I know the honorable member for Brome (Mr. DUNKIN) is unwell, I am willing to relieve him by taking the floor. At the same time, I rise with much diffidence to make the few remarks I intend to offer on this occasion, after the able and eloquent speech to which we have just listened. But, although I may not be able, perhaps, to place before this House any views on this subject which have not already been ably placed before the House and the country by honorable gentlemen who have preceded me, still I feel I would be wanting in my duty to my constituents were I not to explain the reasons which induce me to take the course which I propose to take with reference to this question. The subject is certainly a very important one, and, from the momentous character of the interests involved in this proposed change of our Constitution, deserves the earnest attention of every true Canadian. (Hear, hear.) In the first place, I feel some explanation should be given of the reasons which have induced myself, in common with a large number of the liberal members of Upper Canada, to take the course we have seen fit to take with reference to the present Government, and the policy they have laid before the country. In Upper Canada—I believe in almost every constituency—there has long been an agitation having reference to the sectional difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada. This agitation, instead of diminishing, has continued to gather strength. Ever since the union of 1841, Western Canada has felt—and I think justly felt—that it did not receive that justice to which its wealth and population entitled it. On the other hand, the French population of Lower Canada believed, or professed to believe, that an increased representation of Upper Canada in the Legislature would tend to destroy their language, their laws, and their religion. The difficult position into which we were brought by this antagonism was such, that when the proposition came from the Government that the Honorable the President of the Council (Hon. Mr. BROWN) should unite with them to see if some means could not be devised by which these unfortunate sectional difficulties might be arranged, I felt it my duty—however unpleasant, however strange it may have seemed that we should alienate ourselves from the liberal section of Lower Canada—yet, satisfied that some change was necessary in the management of the public affairs of this country, I felt it my duty, as an Upper Canadian—I may say as a Canadian—to do, as

far as I possibly could, what might tend to remove from our country the unfortunate difficulties under which we have labored. (Hear, hear.) I believe that the people of Upper Canada at least—I may say of Canada generally—have become tired of the strife in which we have been involved for many years, and which has put a stop to that practical and useful legislation which the country required for the development of its resources. I believe the people of this country, in consequence of the position in which we found ourselves, had become earnestly desirous of a change; but the change they looked to was not in the direction of a union with the United States. (Hear, hear.) The change they looked for was in the direction of a union with the other British provinces; one which should embrace—I hope at no distant day—the British colonies on the far Pacific coast, as well as those to the east of us, bordering on the Atlantic. (Hear, hear.) I believe that this scheme of union now proposed—though I feel that it has many imperfections—is still a step in the right direction. It is perfectly impossible that the people of this country should be satisfied to remain in the agitated state, politically, in which they have hitherto been, and which might ultimately land them in difficulties, for which no other solution could be found than that to which our neighbors on the other side of the line have unfortunately been compelled to resort. (Hear, hear.) The honorable member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. DORION) truly said, so long ago as 1858, that the country was then almost verging on revolution, and that a change was necessary. The necessity for such a change, instead of diminishing since, has increased. (Hear, hear.) As far as I have been able to ascertain the feelings of the members of this House, I have not as yet understood one honorable gentleman to state that he was opposed to a union with the other provinces. Even the honorable gentleman who has preceded me has stated that he advocates such a union, and believes it would be beneficial to this country; only he did not like the manner and the details of the present scheme. But, while he and other honorable gentlemen have condemned that scheme of union which is now submitted to the House, while professing to be in favor of union in the abstract, I have as yet failed to find one of them offering anything as an improvement upon it. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. HOLTON—We have a right to amend this scheme.