

of Confederation, but I think it depends altogether upon the details of that scheme whether they will give it their approval or not. I have no hesitation in declaring what is the opinion of the people of my division. I meet and mingle with them almost daily, and have had ample opportunities of ascertaining their views and sentiments. I believe that a very large proportion of them have no fixed and definite opinions with regard to this scheme. They are in favor of Confederation, but they have no definite distinct ideas in regard to the details of the scheme proposed. If they knew that their taxation would be largely increased by it, and that it would add heavily to the public burdens, they would not support it. (Hear, hear.) I think, then, that we who are placed here to conserve and protect the interests of the public, should be extremely careful and analyse these resolutions thoroughly, and ascertain, as nearly as possible, what their effect is likely to be, before we take the responsibility of voting for them. I have no hesitation in declaring that there never was a period in the history of Canada when the people suffered more than they do at present. (Hear, hear.) In consequence of the personal, municipal and national indebtedness, the farmers of the country were never placed in a worse position than that which they now occupy. (Hear, hear.) When we find that property has depreciated in value within the last five years, twenty, thirty, forty, ay, and even sixty per cent.; when we find that the crops of the country have been steadily decreasing in quantity and value within that period; when we find that the people are dissatisfied with the manner in which the country has been governed during the last eight or ten years; when we find all this, we may believe that they are prepared to accept almost any change that promises a relief from their present difficulties. But we were placed here to conserve their interests, to look after their welfare, and should not hastily adopt any scheme, proposed by any Government—whether all of one party stripe or not—without fully examining it and weighing the results likely to flow from it. (Hear, hear.) It is said that the public is well acquainted with the nature of the scheme. I demur to that statement *in toto*. The public is not acquainted with it in all its bearings, and if there is one thing I regret, it is this, that it has not been made a party measure. (Hear, hear.) I regret this because, although perhaps no party could have carried it as a party measure through this Legislature, it would

have been better if proposed as a party scheme, for then its merits would have been more thoroughly canvassed and its demerits more thoroughly exposed. Our public men would have ranged themselves on either side; some would have favored it, and others would have opposed it; they would have pointed out its defects as well as its good points; the whole subject would have been fully ventilated, and the result would have been that, if passed at all, the scheme would have been as perfect as it was possible to have made it. But what do you find now? You scarcely see a newspaper from one end of the country to the other that is not full of laudations of the scheme. And why? Because the leading public men of the country have thought proper to make a fusion; the leading daily journals on both sides applaud the step and the scheme that followed, and the small papers throughout the province, as in duty bound, follow in their wake.

HON. MR. CAMPBELL—They only express public opinion.

HON. MR. AIKINS—Public opinion, the honorable gentleman says. I say that public opinion has not sufficiently weighed this scheme, and that we should be influenced here by our own matured opinion in regard to it. (Hear, hear.) As I have already stated, I am in favor of the confederation of these provinces, framed on a proper basis; and all I desire is that we should have the opportunity of examining all these resolutions, and if we object to any of them, finding them imperfect or unsuitable, that we should have power to amend them. (Hear, hear.) So far as the amendment that has been proposed is concerned, there are portions of it with which I cordially agree. After it has been thoroughly discussed, I shall, like other honorable members, make up my mind as to what course I shall pursue in reference to it. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. REESOR—As no one has taken the floor to continue the debate, I beg to enquire of the Honorable Commissioner of Crown Lands why it is that certain export duties are allowed under this scheme to be collected by the local governments in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but which in Canada are collected by the General Government? It is part of the forty-third resolution, which reads:—"The local legislatures shall have power to make laws respecting the following subjects: Direct taxation, and in New Brunswick the imposition of duties on the export of timber, logs, masts, spars, deals and sawn lumber; and in Nova Scotia, of