

that this subject has engaged our anxious attention as a Government. The Provincial Government has been in continued correspondence with the Home Government as to the best means of organizing an efficient defence against every hostile pressure, from whatever source it may come. And, as this House knows, the resolutions themselves speak of the defence question as one that must immediately engage the attention of the Confederation. We had hoped that the Confederation scheme would have assumed such an aspect that the question could have been adjudged of as a whole, and that one organized system of defence could have been arranged between the Federal Government and the Imperial Government at an early day. But we cannot disguise, nor can we close our eyes to the fact that the course of events in New Brunswick will prevent an early united action among the provinces on the subject of defence; and, therefore, that question comes up as between Canada and England, and we feel that it cannot be postponed. (Hear, hear.) In fact the subject has already been postponed quite too long. (Hear, hear.) It is time, high time, that it was taken up and dealt with in a vigorous manner. (Hear, hear.) These are two of the reasons which, the Government feel, press for a prompt decision of the House upon the resolutions before it. (Hear, hear.) Then there is a third reason, which is found in the state of the commercial relations existing between Canada and the United States. The threatened repeal of the Reciprocity treaty, the hazard of the United States doing away with the system of bonding goods *in transitu*, and the unsatisfactory position generally of our commercial relations with the neighboring country—all this calls for immediate action. And the fact of the union of these provinces being postponed, and of the construction, therefore, of the Intercolonial Railway being put off indefinitely, renders this all the more imperative. It is, therefore, the intention of the Government—and they seek the support of this House and of the country to the policy which I now announce—first, to bring this debate to an end with all convenient speed, with a view to having a declaration of the House upon the question of Confederation. The Government, to this end, will press for a vote by every means which they can properly use. Then, secondly, as soon as that is obtained, it is the intention of the Government to ask

the Legislature for a vote of credit, and prorogue Parliament at the earliest possible date. (Hear, hear.) It is their intention to provide that all the unfinished business of the present session shall be so arranged, that it can be proceeded with next session, from the point where it is dropped at the close of this session. Upon the prorogation of Parliament, the Government will send a mission to England at once, for the purpose of discussing and arranging these important points to which I have alluded—the question of Confederation, under its present aspect—the question of defence—and all matters bearing upon our commercial relations with the neighboring country; with instructions to press their work forward with the least possible delay, with the view of enabling the Government to submit the result of the mission—which we hope will be satisfactory—to this House at an early summer session. (Loud cheers.)

HON. J. S. MACDONALD said—The manner and spirit in which the Government have made the announcement of their decision is so far satisfactory. They have, however, adopted a new policy and announced a change of tactics, and one which this House is to be called upon to enforce. They have departed widely from the policy that they decided upon not long since. I beg leave to call the attention of the House to the words used by the Hon. Premier of the Government himself, at the opening of the session. He says :—

They had assumed the charge of affairs with an understanding that they would have a right to appeal to the country; and while they were consulting about it, they received an intimation from the real chief of the Opposition, through one of their own friends, to the effect that he was desirous of making overtures to them, with the view of seeking to accommodate the difficulties. The hon. gentleman and some of his friends then came into contact with the leaders of the Government, and it was agreed between them to try to devise a scheme which would put an end to the misunderstandings, and at the same time secure for Canada and the other provinces a position which would ensure their future safety, and procure for them the respect and confidence of other nations. They arranged a large scheme and a smaller one.

And now, MR. SPEAKER, I wish to call the attention of the House to this point. "If the larger failed, then they were to fall back upon the minor, which provided for a Federation of the two sections of the province."