

course they wished me to pursue with reference to it. I am up to this evening without any answers to that circular, with one or two exceptions which I need not take up the time of the House by further alluding to. I now take it for granted, having given such an ample opportunity to my constituents to express their opinions, that I am at full liberty to pursue that course which I think myself to be for the interests of the country. (Hear, hear.) My feeling in the first instance was that the matter was being pressed too rapidly in this House—that we might have waited for a little—that we should have allowed the other House to go on and adopt the resolutions first, if they did adopt them, before we were called on to pronounce a final decision upon them. But I have somewhat changed my mind from hearing the able speeches of honorable gentlemen both for and against the amendment now under the consideration of the House; and I have come to the conclusion to give an independent vote, according to the best judgment I can form, since my constituents, after being invited to express their opinions, up to this hour have not responded to the request. I speak here as a representative of Central Canada, and particularly of the Ottawa country. The people there are engaged mainly in one trade, the lumber trade; and, with reference to that trade, the promulgation of this scheme has caused us some feelings of apprehension, not to say gloom. Till within the last few hours, as late as yesterday, I was still in the dark as to the bearings of the scheme in that respect. But I have now had assurances from the Government—and particularly from one or two members of it—that the scheme is not going to inflict that injury upon the lumbering interest which we imagined. In fact the clause relating to that subject has been so explained to me, that I am now perfectly satisfied. (Hear, hear.) My feeling formerly was that our trade was treated in a manner which it did not deserve. Here we have a trade employing many thousands of people—employing a large amount of shipping to carry away the produce of our forests, which exceeds the amount of the exported agricultural produce of the country by a value of some two millions of dollars. We naturally felt that such a trade had some right to be considered. (Hear, hear.) However, accepting the assurances of honorable gentlemen, in whom I have the utmost confidence, who compose the present Government, I am now quite prepared, as one of the representatives of the Ottawa section of country, to leave that

matter in their hands. A great deal has been said in this debate on the general question of the Confederation of these provinces, and as to that I shall say but little. As I have already stated, I am an advocate of union. I would even say that the scheme of the delegates to the Quebec Conference does not go far enough. I contend that, instead of merely taking in the provinces to the east of us, the scheme should have embraced British Columbia and the whole of the territory to the west. An honorable friend near me says that will come in good time. But I am afraid that some Downing-street or other influence may prevent it. (Cries of “no, no!”) I should like to see the Pacific as the western boundary of this young Confederation, in the same way as the Atlantic is its eastern limit, so that we should have one country stretching from ocean to ocean. (Hear, hear.) A great deal has been said in this debate on the subject of railways. Honorable gentlemen have spoken of the cost of building our railways, of the damage the Grand Trunk has done, and of the profits certain gentlemen have made out of it. For the life of me, I cannot see the force of their arguments. True, the Grand Trunk has cost a great deal of money, but how should we feel if we had to go back to the state of things which existed when we had no railroad? What should we do if the Grand Trunk were now taken from us? I believe we could not do without it. It has become a necessity. Every man within the range of its influence, has had his land enhanced in value—and the debt of \$15,000,000 or \$16,000,000, while of course in itself a great deal of money, is nothing when we reflect on the ability of the provinces to bear it. If spared to continue here during my term of eight years, I shall still advocate the Intercolonial Railway as a line necessary to connect us with the seaboard. It will cost us some little money no doubt, but it will yield us compensating advantages. There are large forests to the east of us, which have still to yield up their wealth, and no one can tell how much may come out of that country, when its resources are developed. The subsidy we are now paying the ocean steamships will go a good way to pay the interest on our share of the cost of the railway. Besides we are now spending a great deal of money to bring population into these provinces—an object that will be promoted to a large extent by the building of that road. To build it will take some four or five years, and we cannot tell how much that section of the country will be settled in that time. It will no doubt