

press, that it was not possible the measure could be passed until it had been submitted to the people; it was looked upon as a thing which was quite impossible. There is no doubt the organ of the Ministry in Toronto—the organ more particularly of the President of the Council—did declare from the first, as if throwing out a feeler, that it would not be necessary to submit it to the people. But the press generally took a different view of the question, when out came that remarkable circular from the Provincial Secretary's office—(hear, hear)—which had such a magical effect, that at once the story was changed, and the advocacy was begun of disposing of the question without submitting it to the people, although the people themselves never dreamt that it could be carried through this House and become a fixed fact until that step was taken. I do not see how any man, who does not desire to make himself amenable to the charge of a breach of the trust reposed in him, can come here, and without consulting those who sent him, change a Constitution affecting the well-being of millions. (Hear, hear.) Those who have to pay for all this—who provide the revenue for carrying on the affairs of the country—are not at liberty to express their views on the subject in the legitimate way known to the Constitution. It is argued that there have been no petitions presented against Confederation; but where, I ask, has there been any agitation in reference to the question? Where has it been contested at the polls? I stand here an elected member, who ran against the Provincial Secretary, when, as a member of the government formed for the purpose of carrying out this scheme, he returned to his constituents for reelection, and I succeeded in defeating him. So far, therefore, as the people of North Ontario have spoken at all, their pronouncing, in one way, has been against it.

HON. MR. BROWN—Hear! hear!

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I do not mean to say, MR. SPEAKER, that they did pronounce definitely against it—

HON. MR. BROWN—Hear! hear!

MR. M. C. CAMERON—For when it was being discussed, I told them I was not prepared to pronounce against it myself—

HON. MR. BROWN—Hear! hear!

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I said that I must know what the scheme was before I could say whether I would vote for it or against it.

HON. MR. BROWN—Hear! hear!

MR. M. C. CAMERON—But this much is certain, that the President of the Council who took the trouble to go into the riding, to stump it, to hold meetings there, and to speak against me at every meeting he held, took the opportunity of declaring that unless the Provincial Secretary was returned, it would seriously damage and endanger the scheme. And notwithstanding all these warnings, the people thought fit to return me (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. MACDOUGALL—Will the hon. gentleman allow me to interrupt him? Does the hon. gentleman mean to convey to this House the impression that he did not declare himself in favor of the policy of the Government on the subject of Federation?

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I mean very distinctly to say that I did not declare myself in favor of the policy of the Government. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. BROWN—Oh! oh!

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I declared there as I declare here, that I was in favor of a union of the provinces. But whether the union contemplated was a union which could be approved of, or whether it would be to the advantage of the country, I was unable to say until I more fully understood the scheme, and the hon. gentleman was not in a position at that time to explain the scheme, or to say what it was.

AN HON. MEMBER—How about the elections to the Upper House?

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I think there were two elections only for the Upper House in which the question was a test one.

AN HON. MEMBER—Which were they?

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I think Saugeen was one.

MR. THOMAS FERGUSON—Oh, but Saugeen would have been carried by us, no matter whether there was Confederation or no Confederation. (Laughter.) Everybody knows that.

MR. M. C. CAMERON—Be that as it may, I am quite satisfied the people were under the impression, and that the candidates who appeared before them were also under the impression, that this thing would never become law—that this Constitution of ours would never be changed, without the constituencies having an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. It was never supposed that the people's representatives, sent here for an entirely different purpose, would presume or assume to set aside the Constitution, to make a complete revolution in the affairs