

that this discussion would be kept up to an extent which would utterly frustrate the prompt accomplishment of those great purposes for which this Government was formed. (Hear, hear)

HON. MR. EVANTUREL—As one of the friends of the present Administration, I must say that I am surprised by the conduct of the Government and the extreme position in which they choose to place themselves. For my part, I am in favour of the principle of Confederation, and one of those who maintain that by means of that principle the rights and liberties of each of the contracting parties may be preserved; but, on the other hand, I am of opinion, and I do not disguise it from myself, that it may be so applied as to endanger and even destroy, or nearly so, the rights and privileges of a state which is a party to this Confederation. Everything, therefore, depends on the conditions of the contract. As a friend of the Administration I can understand, as well as any one, that any Confederation and particularly such a one as this which is now laid before us, can only be brought about by means of a compromise; and, on this account, Mr. SPEAKER—and it is probably needless to proclaim it here—I am ready and disposed to go to as great a length as it is possible for any man to go. I am also one of those who, when we are called upon to unite, under the ægis of a strong government, the different provinces of British North America, and when I see that the general interest calls for such a union, will give my cordial support to all who seek to establish such a government. I shall always be prepared to meet them half-way; but when the question assumes a different shape, as it now does, and when, in consequence of the events announced to this House yesterday, the Constitution proposed to us seems to concern none but the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, I say, Mr. SPEAKER, that the compromise between the different provinces no longer existing, we are no longer called upon to be so generous. I say that if we admit that New Brunswick, by its recent repudiation, and Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are no longer parties to the contracts agreed on between the provinces, and we have now to ask of England to modify the Constitution only in relation to the two Canadas, I say that the conditions are no longer the same as they concern us—(hear, hear)—and that I am on that account much less disposed to allow the Government to proceed to present in England, as the basis of our future Constitution, the resolutions

which we have been compelled to accept in very unfavorable circumstances. I do not hesitate in saying that the position assumed by the Government is a very dangerous one for themselves, and for those who would gladly assist them to pass a good scheme of Confederation. If I understand aright, the intention of the Government, in moving the previous question, is to place their friends in the awkward position of not being able to move any modification of the plan. In our altered position we are going, therefore, to say to England that we were obliged to submit to such and such concessions in order to come to an understanding; that the other provinces have backed out of the bargain, notwithstanding these onerous concessions and the compromise which we were obliged to make, and which have not been accepted by the other parties; and that, in the face of all this, we come to pray that our Constitution may be altered so as to accord with those very same onerous conditions which we had accepted at the Quebec Conference. Why tie us down so strictly now? Why should we not avail ourselves of the retrogression of the provinces to make alterations in the scheme which will be less onerous for us? I think it my duty to declare that the Government, in acting as they have done, place their friends in a very awkward position. For my part, Mr. SPEAKER, I am strongly in favor of Confederation, and am ready to support the Government in their efforts to release the chariot of the state from the position in which it now lies; but I wish, on the other hand—and I think it is but bare justice to say it—I wish that Ministers should place us in such a position before the country, that I and all others may be able to say that we have done our best to improve the situation. This is why I so deeply regret that the Government have thought fit to take their present arbitrary attitude. (Hear, hear.) I acknowledge, with the Administration, that time is precious; but we ought not, in avoiding one danger, to risk falling into another. I acknowledge also that the course of events which has taken place within a few days gives reason to apprehend that British rule in the provinces of British North America may cease altogether in a few years. I admit all these dangers, Mr. SPEAKER; but on the other hand I do not conceal from myself that the extreme position in which we are placed does not tend to diminish them. On the contrary, I am greatly afraid that if public opinion be too deeply stirred by the imposition of a new