

WEDNESDAY, *February 22, 1865.*

HON. MR. HOLTON—Before the debate is resumed, I would enquire whether it is the purpose of the Government to bring down the promised measure on the subject of education in Lower Canada, before the House is invited to pass finally the scheme of Confederation now under discussion? I need not say to honorable gentlemen that this is a matter which is regarded with a great deal of interest by a very large portion of the people of Lower Canada, and I think that before my honorable friend for Montreal Centre (Hon. Mr. ROSE) proceeds to take part in this debate, the position of the Government upon that question should be clearly defined.

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—Although the question is not put regularly, I have no hesitation in answering the honorable gentleman. My answer is the answer which has already been given by my honorable friend the member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Mr. GALT).

HON. MR. HOLTON—The honorable member for Sherbrooke has not stated to the House—

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—Order!

HON. MR. HOLTON—I think I am quite in order, on the calling of the Orders of the Day, to put a question of this kind. But I rise again, simply to give notice to the honorable gentleman that I shall renew the question on the Orders of the Day being called to-morrow evening. I do think it is dealing slightly with the House and with the country for honorable gentlemen to refuse to state explicitly what are their purposes with regard to this important question—whether or not their measure is to be brought down before a final vote is taken on Confederation. I shall renew the question to-morrow.

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—The question has been answered twice, but the Government are ready to answer it again, if the honorable gentleman so desires.

HON. MR. ROSE then resumed the adjourned debate. He said—Before I proceed, Mr. SPEAKER, to offer any observations on the motion in your hand, I wish to acknowledge very cordially the consideration which the House evinced last evening during my absence, and especially to acknowledge the courtesy of my honorable friend from Lambton (Mr. A. MACKENZIE), my honorable friend from Chateauguay (Hon. Mr.

HOLTON), and my honorable friend the member for Brome (Mr. DUNKIN). I certainly feel indebted to them for the manner in which they yielded me precedence, at the request of the honorable member for Montmorenci (Hon. Mr. CAUCHON); and I shall endeavour to shew my sense of the kindness of the House, by not trespassing on its indulgence any longer than I can possibly help. And, before I offer any remarks on the question itself, I would premise this, that I hope in the course of them I shall not give utterance to a single expression which would seem to reflect upon those who entertain strong opinions adverse to the proposition now before the House. Far be it from me to deprecate discussion—discussion of the amplest, widest, and most searching character, on this important question. And far be it from me, by the use of a single word, to impute to those honorable members, who feel it their duty to oppose this measure, any absence of patriotism. I believe they are actuated by the same ardent desire for the good of the country, which I claim for myself. (Hear, hear.) It is right that the question should be considered in all its details—not merely in its bearings on the present state of parties, but as respects its influence in all time to come on the country at large. And with that view I think it ought to be calmly, deliberately and patiently investigated, and instead of deprecating the fullest and most ample discussion, I trust the opportunity will be afforded to every honorable member of this House to speak on it in his own way and at his own time. (Hear, hear.) Well, sir, I presume there are few who, in the abstract, would not favour the idea of a union between a number of small states adjoining each other, rather than that they should remain isolated under separate governments. To the idea of union in the abstract between states so circumstanced, I take it no one would be opposed. But the principal ground of the opposition which is made to the present scheme by a not unimportant class, is this—that the mere abstract principle of union does not apply with full force to colonies circumstanced as Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland—the five colonies that are parties to this scheme. It is feared by many that it is the first step towards independence—that it must tend to loosen the ties now existing between this and the mother country—that it changes our relations, and will produce a strength inco-