

been carried out at that time. (Hear, hear.) Well, perhaps the people will see that this great scheme of Confederation, which has made the lion and the lamb lie down together, as the Honorable President of the Council has said, is something that has made them forget that prudent economy that had a large place in the feelings of the people of Upper Canada—a place created, perhaps, chiefly by the Hon. President of the Council himself; and if it is true, as that honorable gentleman urged in his paper, it is still more true and essential now that the people should have an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. And, sir, I adopt the view of the hon. member for Peel—although starting from it, he arrives at somewhat different conclusions from myself—if you force this scheme upon the people without asking for their consent, and if they wake from the apathy which they feel now, to find that they are saddled with burdens which they never contemplated, you make them opponents of the union, and worse opponents than if you asked them now whether they approved of it or not; and so you will have a dissatisfied people laboring under burdens which I fear will eventually create serious discontent throughout the length and breadth of the land. (Hear, hear.) And there is this additional reason for referring the question to the people, now that the other provinces have rejected the scheme, and I presume their governments will not dare to press it forward in opposition to the wishes of the people. Now, hon. gentlemen opposite, when they introduced this scheme, and said they could suffer no amendments to be made in it, put it on the plea that it was absolutely necessary, to keep faith with the Lower Provinces, that they should carry it in its entirety. I am glad to find that the Hon. President of the Council is not so willing and anxious to break faith with those provinces as he was two years ago in reference to one of the essential ingredients of this scheme—the Intercolonial Railway. (Hear, hear.) I admire, sir, the principle of keeping faith in any engagement; but I do not think it was necessary, in order to keep faith in this matter, that it should be treated as the Government proposes that this House shall deal with it. All the Government had to do to carry out what it undertook with the governments of the Lower Provinces, was to bring the scheme before Parliament, as those governments have done, and allow Parliament to deal with it as it saw fit.

There was no necessity for saying to the House that it must reject it or adopt it in its entirety. All the Government had to do—its members not being delegates to the Conference chosen by the people at large, nor even appointed by Parliament for that purpose, but going there, as it were, with the tacit understanding on the part of the representatives of the people in this House, to see whether any arrangement of union might be made that would work beneficially for the interests of the whole provinces—all it had to do was to settle upon some plan which it would report to this House for action; but it had no power whatever to bind this Legislature absolutely and irrevocably to the scheme adopted by the Conference, so that it could not dissent from or alter it. (Hear, hear.) Well, we find honorable gentlemen who advocate this scheme say that it is not a perfect measure, that it is not what any one of the provinces would desire or accept of itself, but that it is necessary to have this patch-work of a Constitution, because there are difficulties which it is necessary to get over and remove; and yet, while it is admitted to be imperfect, to tell us that we should not have an opportunity of saying whether its provisions are right or wrong, is, to my mind, to insult the intelligence of this House, and to commit a wrong which I think honorable gentlemen will have cause to regret hereafter. (Hear, hear.) Many honorable gentlemen have advocated this measure with great warmth, with a feeling of earnestness and truthfulness, and with what I believe to be a sincerely patriotic desire to accomplish something that will work for the best interests of this country. There is, for instance, the hon. member for South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS), who years ago, in one of those day-dreams of youth which most of us experience, conceived the idea that a union of these provinces would be exceedingly beneficial to the people of all of them; and having got that idea somewhat in advance of his fellow-men, he thought that it was absolutely necessary for our prosperity that it should be worked out; but he forgets that in order to secure its smooth working it is necessary to have perfect joints to the machinery, and instead of getting that which will work well for the people, he gets that which has the name only of union, and few indeed of its advantages. If that honorable gentleman had his choice, he would no doubt have chosen something strong and stable, and not