

domestic consideration urged to force us into this scheme. We are asked, "What are you going to do? You must do something. Are you going back to our old state of dead-lock?" At the risk of falling into an unparliamentary expression, I cannot help saying that I am reminded of a paragraph I read the other day in a Lower Province paper, in which the editor was dealing with this same cry, which seems to be raised in Nova Scotia as well as here—the cry that something must be done, that things cannot go on as they are. I have not his words here, but their general effect was this—"Whenever," says he, "I hear this cry raised, that something must be done, I suspect there is a plan on foot to get something very bad done. Things are in a bad way—desperate, may be. But the remedy proposed is sure to be desperate. I am put in mind of a story of two boys who couldn't swim, but by ill luck had upset their canoe in deep water, and by good luck had got on the bottom of it. Says the big boy to the little one, 'Tom, can you pray?' Tom confessed he could not call to mind a prayer suited to the occasion. 'No, Bill,' says he, 'I don't know how.' Bill's answer was earnest, but not parliamentary. It contained a past participle passive which I won't repeat. It was, 'Well, something must be done—and that—soon!'" (Laughter.) Now, seriously, what do honorable gentlemen mean when they raise here this cry that "something must be done?" Is it seriously meant that our past is so bad that positively, on pain of political annihilation, of utter and hopeless ruin, of the last, worst consequences, we must this instant adopt just precisely this scheme? If that is so, if really and truly those political institutions which we were in the habit of saying we enjoyed, which, at all events, we have been living under and, for that matter, are living under now, if they have worked so ill as all that comes to, or rather if we have worked them so ill, I think we hold out poor encouragement to those whom we call upon to take part with us in trying this new experiment. We Canadians have had a legislative union and worked it close upon five and twenty years, and under it have got, it is said, into such a position of embarrassment among ourselves, are working our political institutions so very badly, are in such a frightful fix, that, never mind what the prospects of this particular step may be, it must positively be taken; we cannot help it, we cannot stay as we are, nor yet go back, nor yet go forward, in any course but just this one. (Hear, hear.) If

this thing is really this last desperate remedy for a disease past praying for, then indeed I am desperately afraid, sir, that it will not succeed. The hot haste with which gentlemen are pressing it is of ill omen to the deceived Mother Country, to our deceived sister provinces, and to our most miserably deceived selves. But the truth is that we are in no such sad case; there is no fear of our having to go back to this bugbear past; we could not do it if we would. Things done cannot be undone. In a certain sense, whatever is past is irrevocable, and it is well it should be. True we are told by some of the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches that their present harmony is not peace, but only a sort of armed truce, that old party lines are not effaced, nor going to be. Well, sir, if so, suppose that this scheme should be ever so well dropped, and then that some day soon after these gentlemen should set themselves to the job of finding out who is cuckoo and who hedge-sparrow in the government nest that now shelters them all in such warm quiet, suppose there should thus soon be every effort made to revive old cries and feuds—what then? Would it be the old game over again, or a variation of it amounting to a new one? For a time at least, sir, a breathing time that happily cannot be got over, those old cries and old feuds will not be found to be revivable as of old. Even representation by population will be no such spell to conjure with—will fall on ears far less excitable. It has been adopted by any number of those who might otherwise be the likeliest to run it down. It will be found there might be a worse thing in the minds of many. Give it a new name and couple it with sufficient safeguard against legislation of the local stamp being put through against the vote of the local majority—the principle tacitly held so, and found to answer in the case of Scotland—and parliamentary reform may be found no such bug-bear to speak of after all. And as for the bug-bears of the personal kind, why, sir, after seeing all we have seen of the extent to which gentlemen can set aside or overcome them when occasion may require, it is too much to think they will for some little time go for so very much. Like it or not, honorable gentlemen, for a time, will have to be to some extent busy with a game that shall be not quite the old one. The friends of this project, Mr. SPEAKER, never seem to tire of prophesying to us smooth things, if only it is once first adopted. To every criticism on its many and manifest defects, the ready an-