

uncharitable. This House will believe me when I say that I was as much astonished as others to see a Government formed, composed of men of different parties; but, sir, I came to the conclusion that the state of parties at that time, and the conduct of some so-called friends of the Ministry then in power, led to such an event; and I do not blame the Conservatives who were in that Government for taking in other gentlemen, if by that course they could advance the interests of the country. I have heard it said that some members of the present Government were actuated in entering that Government by the greed of office, its emolument and its power; but I will not be so uncharitable as to make such an accusation against them. I believe they suffered a good deal personally in making the arrangement, and I should be sorry to say they did it for any other object than to satisfy the obligations of their conscience. Their object, sir, was, no doubt, the good of the country, not the small gain or the temporary pleasure of holding for a few years the position of Ministers. (Hear.) I trust they will discharge their duty as Ministers in such a way as to enable the people of the country to regard their advent to power with satisfaction—not to condemn them for wrong-doing as traitors to their country. (Hear, hear.) I think, sir, there are Ministers in the Cabinet who could make far more money in the pursuit of their various avocations than in governing the country, and I trust they will be as economical as they can in all their expenditure, while not losing sight of one great aim—that the people of this country must be prepared to defend themselves, so as not to be afraid of the threats and alarms that reach us every day. If in the end we arrive at a union of the colonies, good results will flow from it. I think we have no evil results to fear, though I would at this moment, if I could, remedy some of the faults in these seventy-two resolutions. I am sorry, for instance, for one thing—that the clause relating to the general education of the people of this country was inserted in its present shape into the resolutions. I am sorry the separate school system is to be retained for Upper Canada. I am sorry that bone of contention is to be incorporated into the permanent Constitution of this country. Though 52,000 Roman Catholic children in Upper Canada attended school in 1863, no more than 15,000 of them ever availed themselves of the separate schools.

A VOICE—You are wrong.

MR. FERGUSON—No, I beg the honor-

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able gentleman's pardon, I am not wrong. I take the figures of the Superintendent of Education, Dr. RYERSON. And of my own knowledge, in places where separate schools have been established and are still existing, the Roman Catholics have grown weary of them, and I am satisfied they would now be willing that their children should get their education along with the children of the rest of the community, without any fear that their respect for their own religion would be interfered with, or their consciences injured. (Hear, hear.) I trust the day will come when they will all take the right view of it, and the question with them with reference to education may be—not what church they belong to—but how their children may receive the best education, and grow up with other youth in peace and harmony. I regret that the subject is mentioned in these resolutions. I had a resolution prepared on that matter, as well as another with regard to our canals, and I am sorry I have not had an opportunity of moving them. I trust, however, that the assurances given by the Honorable President of the Council will be carried out, and that a canal and a direct and unbroken communication from Lake Huron to Quebec will be an accomplished fact at no distant day. The people of Western Canada will be dissatisfied and bitterly disappointed if the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches neglect this; and if they do, they may rest assured that another cry will come, by and by, from Upper Canada which will remove them from their seats, as others have been removed from those seats before. (Hear, hear.) While money contributed by the west is spent in the east, we insist that the improvements necessary for the prosperity of Upper Canada should also receive the attention of the Government; and there is not a man in Upper Canada who does not see the necessity of having our navigation improved and a sufficient channel for sea-going vessels made to the seaboard. If this is attended to, there will not be so much to complain of about the Intercolonial Railroad being built, although we should like to have it built at a cheaper rate. In conclusion, I would say, that notwithstanding all the objections I may have to details—yet, in view of the relations in which we stand to the neighboring country—the urgency of the defence question, and the threatening aspect generally of our present position, I take upon myself, though with great reluctance, the responsibility of voting for this scheme. (Cheers.)