

merits, when, in one day, such a startling political revolution was brought about? Was it, think you, a doubtful consideration that could have induced the Upper Canada Opposition, almost as one man, to cast down their party intrenchments and make common cause with their opponents? Could there have been the slightest doubt as to the sentiments of our people and the imperative necessity of immediate action, when such men as now sit on the treasury benches, were forced, by their supporters, to unite for the settlement of this question? And could there be a more conclusive proof of the ripeness of public opinion than the unanimous and cordial manner in which our so uniting has been sustained by the press of all parties, and by the electors at the polls? (Hear, hear.) Never, I venture to assert, was any great measure so thoroughly understood, and so cordially endorsed by the people of Canada, as this measure now under consideration. (Hear, hear.)—The British Government approves of it—the Legislative Council approves of it—this House almost unanimously approves of it—the press of all parties approves of it—and though the scheme has already been directly submitted to fifty out of the one hundred constituencies into which Canada is divided, only four candidates ventured to appear at the hustings in opposition to it—all of them in Lower Canada—and but two of them were elected. (Cheers.) And yet, sir, we are to be told that we are stealing a march upon the country; that it is not understood by the people; and that we must dissolve the House upon it, at a vast cost to the exchequer, and at the risk of allowing political partisanship to dash the fruit from our hands at the very moment we are about to grasp it! (Hear, hear.) Sir, I have no fears whatever of an appeal to the people. I cannot pretend to speak as to the popular feeling in Lower Canada, but I think I thoroughly understand the popular mind of the western province, and I hesitate not to say that there are not five gentlemen in this chamber (if so many) who could go before their constituents in Upper Canada in opposition to this scheme, with the slightest chance of being returned. (Hear, hear.) It is because I thoroughly comprehend the feelings of the people upon it, that I urge the adoption of this measure at the earliest possible moment. The most gross injustice is to be rectified by it; the tax-payer is to be clothed with his rightful influence by it; new commercial relations are to be opened up by it; a new impulse to the industrial

pursuits of the country will be given by it—and I for one would feel myself false to the cause I have so long sustained, and false to the best interests of my constituents, if I permitted one hour unnecessarily to pass without bringing it to a final issue. (Cheers.) It was only by the concurrence of most propitious circumstances that the wonderful progress this movement has made could have been accomplished. Most peculiar were the circumstances that enabled such a coalition to be formed as that now existing for the settlement of this question—and who shall say at what hour it may not be rent asunder? And yet, who will venture to affirm that if party spirit in all its fierceness were once more to be let loose amongst us, there would be the slightest hope that this great question could be approached with that candor and harmony necessary to its satisfactory solution? (Hear, hear.) Then, sir, at the very moment we resolved to deal with this question of constitutional change, the Maritime Provinces were about to assemble in joint conference to consider whether they ought not to form a union among themselves—and the way was thus most propitiously opened up for the consideration of a union of all British America. The civil war too, in the neighboring republic; the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States; the threatened repeal of the Reciprocity Treaty; the threatened abolition of the American trading system for goods *in transitu* to and from these provinces; the unsettled position of the Hudson's Bay Company; and the changed feeling of England as to the relations of great colonies to the parent state;—all combine at this moment to arrest earnest attention to the gravity of the situation, and unite us all in one vigorous effort to meet the emergency like men. (Hear, hear.) The interests to be affected by this scheme of union are very large and varied—but the pressure of circumstances upon all the colonies is so serious at this moment, that if we cannot now banish partisanship and sectionalism and petty objections, and look at the matter on its broad intrinsic merits, what hope is there of our ever being able to do so? An appeal to the people of Canada on this measure simply means postponement of the question for a year—and who can tell how changed ere then may be the circumstances surrounding us? Sir, the man who strives for the postponement of this measure on any ground, is doing what he can to kill it almost as effectually as if he voted against it. (Hear, hear.) Let there be no mistake as to the manner in which the