

the small band who stand here to-night for the rights of the people, in opposition to this scheme, it pronounces, on the other, the just condemnation of those who trample on those rights, and who forget, in the pride of their brief authority, who it was that raised them to the positions they occupy, not that they might coerce, but carry out the will of the people, the only rightful source of all political power. (Cheers.)

MR. J. S. ROSS—I will not attempt to address the House at any great length at this late hour of the evening, as I think it very desirable that this debate should be brought to a close at as early a day as possible; and believing that that is the prevailing opinion in this House, I shall endeavor to be as brief as I can. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat has referred to one matter on which I shall not at present say anything, on which I shall not commit myself. I suppose that it will be very well understood what I refer to, without my alluding to it more particularly. But there was another statement which he made—that there was no necessity for any change—on which I shall dwell shortly, and endeavor to show that there was a necessity for a change. It must be in the recollection of every hon. member in this House, that one year ago affairs were in such a state—such difficulties presented themselves, that legislation was becoming almost impracticable. No better proof of this could be desired than that the Government of the day found themselves so surrounded with difficulties in the House, that they declared themselves unable to carry on the administration of the affairs of the country in a satisfactory manner. Now, why should a Government possessing so much talent and ability as that Government did, make that declaration, if there was no necessity for it? (Hear, hear.)

HON. J. S. MACDONALD—If you had voted with us, it would have been all right. (Hear and laughter.)

MR. ROSS—Although I always entertained a very high opinion of the honorable gentleman who was Premier of that Government, I differed from him politically. Then, Mr. SPEAKER, there is another matter to which I shall refer, to show that this House did acknowledge that there were difficulties in the way. A motion was made by the honorable member for South Oxford for the appointment of a committee on constitutional changes. That committee reported to this

House, and I will just read the last paragraph of that report in support of what I have said :—

A strong feeling was found to exist among the members of the committee in favor of changes in the direction of a Federative system, applied either to Canada alone, or to the whole British North American Provinces, and such progress has been made as to warrant the committee in recommending that the subject be again referred to a committee at the next session of Parliament.

Now, this was signed by twelve gentlemen, and among them I find the honorable member for Chateauguay, who then declared that there was a necessity for some change. I think, Mr. SPEAKER, that this clearly shows that the matter was not brought upon us in a hurry, that the scheme now before us is a subject which has been looked forward to for some time. When we refer to that period, we find that the Government of the day placed their resignations in His Excellency's hands, a new Government was formed which met the House on the 3rd of May, and on the 14th of June they were defeated. At that time, I believe, they had obtained from His Excellency permission to dissolve the House. An effort was made, however, to effect a change in the Administration, in order that it might command a majority of this House, and be enabled to carry on the business of the country. After some time, a reconstruction was effected, and in the programme which the present Government adopted, they did announce that they would take up this question, and that when they met the House the next session, they would be prepared to lay before the House a measure for the purpose of removing existing difficulties, by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-West territory to be incorporated with the same system of government. If there were objections to a change, why were they not made at that time? Did not the House commit itself, then, by receiving it without any objection? Hence I think that the Government pursued a manly, straightforward course in coming down and announcing what their scheme was; and whether that scheme is a good or a bad one, they have redeemed their pledges; they have met this House with a scheme for the Confederation of the British North American Provinces. (Hear.) Whether this scheme is all that we could desire or not, is perhaps a matter on which