

the same comfortable feeling if the question were referred to the people; so that as an argument in favor of our making an immediate decision does not amount to much, and it certainly does not impose on us the duty of hastily taking the whole scheme as it is. (Hear, hear.) I have endeavoured, hon. gentlemen, to show that I am guided by an honest, earnest desire to advance the interests of the country by the course I now propose to take in reference to this amendment, and I have endeavored to disabuse the minds of those who think that in supporting it I am acting in hostility to a scheme which I believe will be advantageous to the country, but the advantages of which I think cannot be secured without referring it to the people. I presume it is altogether likely—perhaps I may consider it a certainty—that this is to be the last time I shall appear as a representative in the Council of my country. I am anxious, short as my parliamentary career has been and is probably destined to be, that it should be unsullied by anything that can even have the appearance of selfishness. I am, therefore, unwilling to record a vote which might either have the effect of making me a member for life, or of helping to take away the privilege which my constituents at present enjoy, of having a representative in the Legislative Council. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. BUREAU—It is not my intention to take part in the debate on the amendment which is now engaging the attention of this Honorable House; but I really do not feel justified in passing over in silence the declaration which has just been made by the hon. member for Toronto (Hon. Mr. Ross.) That gentleman said, with perfect *naïveté*, that if the Ministry submitted a bill respecting the organization of the local governments, the course would be a bad one; for, said he, difficulties would probably arise in relation to the matter, which might result in the resignation of several members of the present Cabinet. In those few words the hon. member for Toronto has furnished the best argument in favor of the delay for which we ask; but such was not his intention. In a similar sense, some other hon. members have, in my opinion, exhibited a degree of force and logic which is truly remarkable. But can it be possible to make a request more essentially legitimate in its character than that of the hon. member for Niagara? For my part, I do not think so. And indeed, what can be more reasonable than the wish

to know, and to be in a position to form a sound, complete and satisfactory opinion, both for ourselves and for our constituents, respecting the scheme which is proposed to us? Has not this House a right to require the present Government, within a reasonable period, to lay before it, not only in a general way, but also and more especially in detail, the various aspects of the Constitution which it is wished to have voted with such strange and imprudent precipitation? Let us remember that sometimes no difficulty whatever is raised to devoting an entire session to the consideration of a measure of secondary importance. Last year no attempt was made to pass a new Militia Bill at railroad speed, as it is now proposed to do with the measure for Confederation; on the contrary, all the time necessary to complete it and to examine it in all its aspects was devoted to its consideration. And yet, how immense the difference between these two measures, in regard to their importance and the solemn consequences which might result from them! And further, it cannot be denied, the plan which it is sought to make us adopt is as yet but imperfectly known to the Canadian Legislature, and the people hardly know its outlines, not having yet had time to examine into it, so closely have our ministers invested it with mystery and secrecy. I consider that the hon. member for Toronto shewed rather too much zeal in the cause of his friends when he proceeded to make that declaration, which was heard by the House with well-marked surprise. I am prepared to acknowledge that in so doing he has done us a very great service. I have no doubt whatever, in fact, that as we have been told by the hon. gentleman, the disclosing of the organization of the local governments during this phase of the discussion would, for the Administration of the day, be an act of imprudence, and one which, it is highly probable, would subject it to serious difficulties. I am also of opinion that one of the difficulties, of by no means the least importance, which is feared is that respecting the distribution or division of the part of the public debt which will have to be borne by the different provinces. Indeed it may, with very great reason, be asked whether it will be possible to come to an understanding on this point. With a degree of courage worthy of a better cause, the Ministry now comes to us and says: "First vote the Address, and afterwards we will lay before you the scheme for the organisation