

it have been objected to, and we were reminded the other evening by the honorable member for Chateaugay, that we are not a treaty-making power. Well, in reference to that objection, I believe the Imperial Government has in certain cases, such as the Reciprocity Treaty, conceded to these provinces the right of coercion; and in this case there is the Imperial Despatch of 1862 to Lord MULGRAVE, Governor of Nova Scotia, distinctly authorizing the public men of the colonies to confer with each other on the subject of union, and writing them to submit the result of their conferences to the Imperial Government. (Hear, hear.) We assembled under authority of that despatch, and acted under the sanction it gave. Everything we did was done in form and with propriety, and the result of our proceedings is the document that has been submitted to the Imperial Government as well as to this House, and which we speak of here as a treaty. And that there may be no doubt about our position in regard to that document we say, question it you may, reject it you may, or accept it you may, but alter it you may not. (Hear, hear.) It is beyond your power, or our power, to alter it. There is not a sentence—ay, or even a word—you can alter without desiring to throw out the document. Alter it, and we know at once what you mean—you thereby declare yourselves anti-unionists. (Hear, hear.) On this point, I repeat after all my hon. friends who have already spoken, for one party to alter a treaty, is, of course, to destroy it. Let us be frank with each other; you who do not like our work, nor do you like us who stand by it, clause by clause, line by line, and letter by letter. Oh! but this clause ought to run thus, and this other clause thus. Does any hon. member seriously think that any treaty in the world between five separate provinces ever gave full and entire satisfaction on every point to every party? Does any hon. member seriously expect to have a constitutional act framed to his order, or my order, or any man's order? No, sir, I am sure no legislator at least since ANACHARSIS CLOOTZ was "Attorney General of the Human Race" ever expected such ideal perfection. (Laughter.) It may be said by some hon. gentleman that they admit the principle of this measure to be good, but that it should be dealt with as an ordinary parliamentary subject in the usual parliamentary manner. Mr. SPEAKER, this is not an ordinary parliamentary measure. We do not legislate upon it—we do

not enact it,—that is for a higher authority. Suppose the Address adopted by this House to-morrow, is the act of this House final and conclusive? No. It is for the Imperial Parliament to act upon it. (Hear, hear.) It will be that body that will cause the several propositions to be moulded into a measure which will have the form of law, and these resolutions will probably be the *ipsissima verba* of the measure they will give us and the other provinces. But some hon. gentlemen opposite say, that if there be defects in this measure they ought to be remedied now, and that the Government ought to be glad to have them pointed out. Yes, surely, if this were simply the act of the Parliament of Canada; but it is not to be our act alone. It is an Address to the Throne, in the terms of which other colonies are to agree, and even if we were to make alterations in it, we cannot bind them to accept them. If we were weak and wicked enough to alter a solemn agreement with the other provinces, the moment their representatives had turned their backs and gone home, what purpose would it serve except that of defeating the whole measure and throwing it as well as the country back again into chaos. (Hear, hear.) I admit, sir, as we have been told, that we ought to aim at perfection, but who has ever attained it, except perhaps the hon. member for Brome. (Laughter.) We, however, did strive and aim at the mark, and we think we made a tolerably good shot. The hon. member for Chateaugay will not be satisfied—insatiate archer!—unless we hit the bull's eye. (Laughter.) My hon. friend is well read in political literature—will he mention me one authority, from the first to the last, who ever held that human government ever was or could be anything more than what a modern sage called "an approximation to the right," and an ancient called "the possible best." Well, we believe we have here given to our countrymen of all the provinces the possible best—that we have given it to them in the most imperative moment—their representatives and ours have labored at it, letter and spirit, form and substance, until they found this basis of agreement, which we are all alike confident will not now, nor for many a day to come, be easily swept away. Before I pass to another point, sir, permit me to pay my tribute of unfeigned respect to one of our Canadian colleagues in this work, who is no longer with us; I mean the present Vice-Chancellor of Upper Canada (Hon. Mr. MOWAT), who