

improvement in the other members of the Administration—(laughter)—and although I have been deceived and disappointed in my expectations, had the scheme propounded to this House been such as to commend itself to my judgment, and convince me it would remove the sectional difficulties long complained of, it would have received my approval. I had hoped, too, and fully believed, that when it came to be pronounced upon by the Legislature, it would, before final adoption, be submitted to the people for their approval. (Hear, hear.) That this was the opinion of a large majority of the people of Upper Canada, in November and December last, is, I think, beyond doubt. The local papers in all sections of Upper Canada asserted that the Government could not take upon itself the fearful responsibility of forcing such a measure upon the people, without asking whether they consented to it or not. Allow me, sir, to read an extract from one that has accidentally fallen into my hands, in order to show the feeling of the people of Upper Canada upon this point. I am not in the habit of addressing the House very often, and when I speak I fear I do not acquit myself very creditably; and feeling on this occasion an unusual sense of responsibility, I am afraid I shall be worse than usual, which at all times is very indifferent. But I am impelled by a sense of duty to give my views upon the subject, and the House, I am sure, will overlook any shortcomings that I may exhibit. (Hear, hear.) The extract to which I have alluded reads as follows:—

Whatever mode may be finally chosen to bring the matter before the public, we feel certain that the people of this province, and of either of the Maritime Provinces, will tolerate no proceeding on the part of any one that has a tendency to despotism. The Canadians have battled for a long series of years for the liberties now enjoyed by them, and we greatly mistake if they allow the present or any other Government to make such sweeping alterations in the Constitution of the country without consulting them. The members of the respective governments were not appointed to frame a new Constitution; neither were the members of the various legislatures chosen for that purpose.

Mr. SPEAKER, I feel that in my own case in its fullest force. (Hear, hear.)

The question, as we have already said, was not even hinted at during the last election.—

I never, sir, heard it mooted. (Hear, hear.)

Nor was the voice of public opinion in its favor so strong, that it was forced upon the Government or Legislature. So far as Canada is concerned, it was the conception of the Government itself, and was taken up by its members to serve a necessity. This being the case, we contend that the people have a right to be asked to say yea or nay on the subject.

AN HON. MEMBER—What is the name of the paper?

Mr. RYMAL—It is the *Norfolk Reformer*, a paper the several issues of which, for the months of November and December last, were full of sentiments like those I have quoted; but, looking over the numbers that have appeared since that magnetic or mesmerism circular was sent out from the Provincial Secretary's Office, I see that it has sung dumb. (Laughter.) I fearlessly assert that the Confederation of the British North American Provinces has taken no strong hold of the public mind of Canada. It never was demanded, and I believe as certainly as that I am now speaking, that if this matter were submitted to the people, and fully understood by them, they would reject it. (Hear, hear.) I have endeavored to obtain from the leading men in the riding which I have the honor to represent, an expression of their opinions with reference to this scheme. At the time the resolutions were printed here, I secured from twenty to twenty-five copies, and mailed them to my constituency, asking an expression of opinion as to the propriety of adopting them. Only two sent anything like a favorable verdict, and all they were able to say in their favor was, that they thought the scheme might be advantageous in a national point of view, but they feared the expense of carrying it out would more than counter-balance the advantages. These are the most favorable expressions of opinion I have got, while in other instances they are denounced *in toto*. Allow me to read an extract from a letter I have received from one of the most influential gentlemen residing in South Wentworth, and who is withal a strong practical reformer, having received a part of his political education from the *Globe*. (Hear, hear.) He says:—

I did at one time allow myself to fancy that Confederation was destined to afford a means of escape from most of the evils which surround our political fabric. When I glanced over the printed resolutions now before the Legislature, I thought that we, the strongest member of the proposed Confederation had, in some respects decidedly the