

Council I believe to be contrary to the wishes of a majority of the people of Western Canada, and particularly of my own constituents. I think it will be admitted that the elective system has given us a class of representatives in that body which would do honor to any country in the world, and I should prefer to see that system continued. But while I would be prepared to vote for an amendment which would have for its object the perpetuation of the present system, provided it could be done without interfering with the success of Confederation, yet I do not believe that my constituents are prepared to reject the whole scheme, simply because there are a few features in it which are not exactly in accordance with their views. And I can assure you, Mr. SPEAKER, that I have no desire to do so. The opponents of the scheme appeal to the French population, telling them that their nationality is in danger, that they will be entirely absorbed in the Central Legislature, and that their rights and liberties will be interfered with. Then the same parties tell the English of Lower Canada that their nationality and their schools will be entirely at the mercy of the French in the Local Legislature. And, with a view of obtaining the defeat of the scheme in the west, they appeal to the pockets of the people of Upper Canada, asserting that they will have to bear the greater proportion of the taxation under the new system. Now, I think it has been clearly shown that the Maritime Provinces will contribute their full share towards the public revenue—that they will pay as much per head as Upper Canada, and much more than Lower Canada, so that the financial argument against Confederation cannot be substantiated. Those honorable gentlemen who are trying to defeat the scheme by appealing to the prejudices and sectional animosities of the people of Lower Canada, should bear in mind that they are pursuing a course which is calculated to mar the harmonious working of any system of government, and that if they should succeed in defeating the scheme, it would go very far to convince the people of Upper Canada that Lower Canada is determined not to consent to any measure of justice to Upper Canada. (Hear, hear.) It is also asserted that this scheme will bring about a separation from the Mother Country. Now, I believe that the advocates of union are as desirous to perpetuate our connection with Great Britain as its opponents, and that it is desirable to maintain that connection as long as possible. But

assuming that we are laying the foundation of a British North American Empire, which is destined to become independent of the Mother Country, after our resources have become sufficiently developed, and our vast territory has been filled up with an industrious, intelligent and thrifty population, I do not think such an anticipation should induce us to vote against it. Another objection which is raised against this scheme is the supposition that the Maritime Provinces will oppose the opening up of the North-West territory, which is an unwarrantable assumption on the part of the opponents of Confederation; for I think it will be found that even the people of those provinces will see that it is for their interest to have that portion of our dominions opened up for settlement. Such a course would extend their field for trade and commerce, in which the Maritime Provinces are extensively engaged, so that the advantages would be of a mutual character. A great deal has been said about submitting the scheme to the people before it is finally adopted, and I must say that I could never make up my mind to vote for it without first having an expression of popular opinion upon it in some way or other, unless I were perfectly satisfied that a large majority of my constituents are in favor of it. I took the precaution to hold a number of public meetings in the constituency which I represent, in order to obtain the views of the people upon it, and, in almost every instance, a large majority present at those meetings, not only expressed themselves in favor of the general features of the scheme, but also expressed a desire that it should be dealt with and adopted by this Parliament without first holding a general election. I shall take much pleasure in voting for the scheme now before the House, believing that by so doing I shall best discharge my duty to my constituents and to the country at large. (Cheers.)

MR. WALSH said—It was my intention, during the earlier stages of this debate, to have asked the House to bear with me while I made some lengthened remarks on the important subject embraced in the resolutions now in your hands. It was my intention to review the circumstances which made it necessary that the scheme now submitted should be placed before the inhabitants of British North America—to trace fully the course of the sectional agitation with reference to the difficulties between Upper and Lower Canada—and to show how it had gradually grown in importance, until the time had arrived when we had to accept