

way, by the longest route it will be possible to find, is the pivot on which the scheme revolves. If it be the desire to get to the seaboard, and not to give certain contracting firms a job, why is not the shortest, cheapest and best route, from every point of view, selected? Why climb over the mountains of the centre of New Brunswick, or along the seacoast, when a road can be constructed by a better but shorter route, for much less money, by the valley of the St. John? I contend that the route this road is to run should be made known to this House. It is a question involving the expenditure of millions, and if the cheaper route be built, the saving to Canada will also be many millions of dollars. I know that certain honorable gentlemen are prepared to vote on this question phlegmatically. (Laughter.)

MR. H. MACKENZIE—What is it to vote phlegmatically?

MR. WALLBRIDGE—An hon. gentleman asks me what a phlegmatic vote is? I would inform him it is to vote on this question, which so deeply concerns our future interests, without inquiry. It will cause some honorable gentlemen to give the lie to their whole political lives. It is to vote away, without enquiry, our rights to the North-West territory. It is to seal up that country hermetically for all time to come. That is what I call giving a phlegmatic vote. (Hear, hear.) We find that the representatives at the Conference from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick made it a point of the proposed Constitution to construct the Intercolonial Railway, also took good care to make the opening of the North-West contingent upon the state of the finances, and the Confederation will commence life with a debt of \$150,000,000. It is evident, therefore, that the North-West is hermetically sealed, as far as Canada is concerned. What shall we gain by this particular scheme of Confederation? We have been running with railway speed into bankruptcy, and this scheme is one which will add immensely to our debt, and especially to our debt on account of unproductive and useless railways, and of which we do not even know the route, although, now that the elections in New Brunswick are over, it cannot affect the position in that province to give the information we are seeking. (Hear, hear.) I am in favor of a union of the British North American Provinces. But the union that is desirable is a union in fact, not an

organized system of discord, with a number of petty legislatures that will only serve to create strife and prevent our moving forward in the career of civilization and improvement. The scheme of the hon. gentlemen, to some extent, will give us the advantages of a legislative union, but it is incumbered with objectionable details—details which, in their importance, amount to principles, and to secure their rejection or amendment I shall employ what energy I can bring to bear. The scheme has been submitted to the people in New Brunswick, and it has there been admitted, as well as in Nova Scotia, that it was subject to amendment. Why should Canada not have the same right accorded? Why should we take the scheme in its entirety, when its authors cannot justify certain provisions which specially relate to this country? It is treating Canada with contempt, and hon. gentlemen will be held responsible. I have very great confidence in several of the hon. gentlemen opposite. I have very great confidence in the Hon. President of the Council and the two other hon. gentlemen whom he took into the Ministry with him. But, when the Hon. the President of the Council consented to go into the Administration without getting a fair representation in it of the party with which he was acting, both in Upper and in Lower Canada, he miscarried. (Laughter.) That may account for some of the objectionable features of this measure. It may account for Canada consenting, and for the Hon. President of the Council giving his consent, that the voting at the Conference should be by provinces, instead of by numbers. They took very good care to arrange that we should pay according to population. (Hear, hear.) But they voted by provinces, and in that way hampered the scheme with many objectionable details. And I think, therefore, it is now competent for this House to criticise those details, and to take such steps as will ensure their exclusion from the Imperial Act. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. HOLTON—Before these explanations are over—and I have no desire to prolong them further than is necessary—I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of Finance as to the course to be pursued with reference to the Lower Canada School Law, which was promised to be introduced this session. We are now told a prorogation is to take place, and I would like to know whether the pledge given by the honorable gentleman at Sherbrooke, on behalf of himself and his col-