

has had some experience in that way of doing things. Those details become vested right, and the sections benefited by them claim them as such, and tenaciously cling to them. (Hear, hear.) Mr. SPEAKER, I have not time to go into this subject at this point, and show how objectionable are many of the details; but I maintain the position that it is most absurd and illogical to ask us to accept the scheme as a whole, and leave such objectionable details to be regulated hereafter. When the union of these provinces took place in 1841, the discussion in relation to it in the British Houses of Parliament showed that the framers of the Union Act expected that any difficulties that might grow out of it would be easily regulated by the united Parliament of Canada—that such questions as representation by population could be dealt with at any time. But what happened? Why! Lower Canada treated equal representation as a vested right, and stood firmly on that right. This being the case, there was no process provided by which the evil could be regulated. The result was that a great struggle came on, the difficulties arising out of which, honorable gentlemen opposite tell us, have proved our Constitution to be a failure. From this experience of the past, we ought to learn that it is very bad policy to deliberately put errors in our Constitution and trust to the future to remedy them. If you speak of a union of all British North America, nobody objects. Everybody is in favor of a union, provided the details are satisfactory; but providing imperfect details and trusting to the future for rendering them what they ought to have been made at the outset, reminds me of an incident a friend related the other day. A carter was about to take a friend of mine with his baggage to the railway station, when my friend observed that one of the tugs was nothing but a piece of rope. Says my friend, "You are not going to take me through these twenty miles of woods with that string, are you?" "Oh! never mind," says he, "I have more strings in my pocket with which I can regulate that on the road." So honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches ask us to follow them in their rickety concern, assuring us that they have a pocketful of strings with which they can regulate things on the way. (Laughter.) But, sir, they will find no little difficulty in bringing their pocketful of strings into operation. They will find almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of removing the vested rights that will grow up

under any system that may be established. I believe that a number of circumstances connected with this scheme, a discussion of which I cannot now go into, render it the general opinion of those whom it is my business to represent on this floor, that in its present shape this scheme ought not to be carried into effect. First of all, so sweeping a measure as this—one for sweeping away our entire Constitution and substituting a new one unknown to the British flag—ought not to be carried out until it is submitted to the people; and, secondly, the multitude of details which it embraces ought to be calmly and critically considered, with a view to their amendment, where found defective, before being incorporated in our Constitution. I do not say that this is the feeling of the Conservative party of my own constituency, or of the Eastern Townships; but I do say that even among that party there are grave apprehensions of difficulty growing out of such a jumble as is presented for our adoption, when no time is to be allowed even for their consideration, to say nothing of their amendment. And many of that party have no hesitation in giving expression to those feelings. I have not met with a man, conservative or reformer, during my absence from this session of the House, who has not been ready to contend that it was the first duty of the Government to provide for consulting the people, and ascertaining from them, in a definite manner, whether they desired the change proposed or not. (Hear, hear.) Having thus briefly expressed my views, Mr. SPEAKER, in order not to weary the House at this late hour of the night—or rather of the morning, for it is now after three o'clock—I will conclude by stating that I feel it my duty, as a true representative, to record my vote against the resolutions. (Cheers.)

MR. COWAN—Mr. SPEAKER, the honorable member for Shefford says that he and his friends sympathised with the Reform party of Upper Canada when they were branded as rebels and writhing under the charge of disloyalty, and blames us for not extending the same sympathy to him and his friends when laboring under a similar accusation. I don't deny, sir, that the reformers of Upper Canada have often been branded as rebels, but I do most emphatically deny that they ever *writhed* under the false accusation. Conscious of their fealty to both their Queen and country, they treated with the most sovereign con-