

HON. MR. HOLTON—Hear, hear.

MR. JONES—The way in which I look at this question does not at all depend on whether this hon. gentleman or that hon. gentleman may be at the head of affairs in this country; or whether we may have a Coalition Government or a purely party Government; but I consider we should look at the scheme on its own merits, and deal with it as a whole, giving a fair and square vote on the resolutions as a whole. (Hear, hear.) I think, therefore, that the course which has been taken by the Government to obtain such a vote is the wise and honest course. (Hear, hear.) I think they deserve credit for the step they have taken with a view to bringing this debate to a close. We have been debating this question day after day for a number of weeks, and I must say that the opposition given by hon. gentlemen on the other side has been of a very factious character; time after time they have risen to make motions on this, that, and the other thing, keeping the House from addressing itself to the matter really under debate, and protracting unnecessarily the decision of the question. Only the night before last, when an hon. gentleman had risen for the purpose of addressing the House, they cried out that it was too late, and called for an adjournment of the debate; and yet, when that was agreed to, they wasted two or three hours in moving additions to that motion for adjournment. This was done, too, by hon. gentlemen who were well conversant with the rules of this House, and who must have known that these motions were not in order. At midnight they were too tired to allow the debate to go on, and yet they kept the House sitting after that till three in the morning, discussing mere points of order. (Hear, hear.) That has been the course pursued by hon. gentlemen opposite. And what, on the other hand, has been the course pursued by the Administration? Did they not put a motion on the notice paper—a motion which the factiousness of hon. gentlemen opposite prevented from being put to the vote—to give further time for the discussion of this question, by resolving that instead of its being taken up at half-past seven, it should be taken up at three, the whole time of the House being devoted to it? We have been debating the question for weeks, and though hon. gentlemen opposite have been in their places, they have not proposed a single amendment. And yet, after this had gone on for such a length

of time, so soon as the "previous question" is moved, those hon. gentlemen get up and cry out that they are gagged. Even after the House began to discuss the question at three o'clock, these hon. gentlemen day after day wasted the time by getting in one side-wind after another, in order to create delay, to see if something might not turn up against the scheme. Now, at last, they have got something. Something has turned up in New Brunswick, and I suppose they will now permit us to come to a vote. (Hear, hear.) In discussing this question, I do not see any necessity for going back eight or ten years to the speeches of hon. members. I do not see why lengthy extracts should be read to shew that the hon. member for Montmorency opposed the union of the provinces in 1858, or that the hon. member for Hochelaga, at that time, was in favor of it. I do not see what that has to do with the question before us. It is now submitted in a practical form for our decision, and what we have to do is to give a square vote, yea or nay, that we are in favor of this Confederation, or that we are against it. Our circumstances have changed within the last few years; but it is not on that account merely that I now support this union. I have always, upon every occasion, on the hustings, at public meetings and elsewhere, advocated a union of the British North American Provinces; and were our relations with the United States in the same favorable form that existed some five or six years since, I would still give my support to a union. It is, therefore, sir, not because I think there is a great present necessity for the scheme being brought to a speedy conclusion that I now support it. That present necessity, however, now exists, and I do not see why other hon. gentlemen, after a lapse of five or six years, when times have changed, and a greater urgency has arisen for such a union, should not be allowed to change their minds. "Wise men change their minds; fools have no minds to change." (Hear, hear.) Shortly before the meeting of this House, I advertised that I would hold a series of meetings in the riding of South Leeds, for the purpose of placing my views upon this question before my constituents, and to see whether their views accorded with my own; men of all shades of politics were requested to attend these meetings, and they were very numerous and respectfully attended, not only by those who supported me, but also by those who were my most bitter opponents at the last