

for myself, even on so important a question; and I am persuaded that if there are members of this House who consider themselves authorized to doubt the sanity of those who do not always think as they do, they are not in a majority here. For my own part, Mr. SPEAKER, I respect every man's opinion. I am willing to allow all who are so disposed to think differently from me, and do not, on that account, hold them to be either prejudiced or dishonest; on the contrary, I am willing to believe that they act according to their convictions, and with perfect good faith. I desire that others will judge me in the same manner, and that those from whom I am now dissentient on the subject of the resolutions in your hand, Mr. SPEAKER, will believe, at least, that I too am acting in this matter according to my honest convictions and with good faith; that I, too, am animated by love for my country and my nationality; that I, too, have at heart the preservation of that nationality and those institutions which have been transmitted to us by our fathers, as the reward of so many struggles and sacrifices. (Hear, hear.) At this advanced stage of the debate, it is not my intention to combat or discuss all the arguments which have been urged in favor of Confederation. I must, however, observe that I have not been convinced by the hon. gentlemen who have spoken before me, that the Constitution offered to us embodies guarantees sufficient to protect our rights. I am of opinion, therefore, that the vote which I shall give against Confederation would be given by a large majority of my constituents, and a large majority of the people of Lower Canada; and my opinion on this subject is so firmly grounded, that I should despise myself if, for the sake of not separating from my party, I were to vote for Confederation, my convictions being so strong and so sincere. (Hear, hear.) We were taught to believe, till within the last two or three days, that the most ample discussion of the question would be allowed; but, by the moving of the previous question, the face of things has undergone a change. This House, and all Lower Canada, supposed that before being called upon to vote on the main question, we should have had an opportunity of obtaining an expression of the opinion of the people. I am persuaded that if, after a full and complete discussion of the measure in this House, the people were called upon for their

opinion, they would be more decidedly opposed to Confederation than they ever were to any measure. (Hear.) Unfortunately, as the previous question has been moved, we must vote on the resolutions as they stand, without being able even to move amendments which might render them less objectionable to the country. I now come to the appeal to the people. Well, I maintain that in voting to change the constitution of the Government, without consulting the people on the subject, the members of this House are exceeding their powers; and that even if the people were in favor of Confederation, they ought not to pass it, as they are now about to do, without special authority. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS) has told us that this is no new question—that it has been for a long time a subject of discussion—that the people understood it thoroughly, and that the members of this House were privileged to vote on it without referring it to their constituents. I am quite aware that much has been written on the subject of the Confederation of the provinces; but has the question ever been discussed before the people at elections? I am fully convinced and perfectly certain this question was never brought up at any election, nor the question of any Confederation at all. It has never been laid before the people, and the people have never expressed an opinion on the subject. (Hear, hear.) It appears to me that the amendment which is to be moved by the hon. member for Peel (Hon. J. H. CAMERON), after the present resolutions have been voted by the House, will be in a singular position. (Hear, hear.) I have understood the explanations given by the Honorable Attorney General for Upper Canada (Hon. J. A. MACDONALD), relative to the resolution of the honorable member for Peel—that the resolutions before the House would be passed first, and that afterwards, when the House went into committee, the hon. member for Peel would move his amendment, namely, “that the House will vote the Address to Her Majesty this evening, in order that the Government may despatch it to England to-morrow, if they please, and that on Monday afternoon the hon. member for Peel will come and move an Address to His Excellency, praying that he will refer these resolutions to the people.” (Hear, hear.) I confess that I do not understand how the members of this