

solutions were devised because they were better calculated in this shape to be palatable, if not to this Chamber, at least to other houses of the legislatures of British North America. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—Like other hon. gentlemen who have preceded me, I am overcome with the importance of this subject; and I would fail in my duty were I to give a silent vote on the very grave question now before the House. I feel that, in the language of my hon. friend from the Eastern Division, it is a question of the greatest possible importance; and I think the House has great reason to congratulate itself on the manner in which the discussion of it has been approached—in the way in which it has been treated, both by the friends of the resolutions and by those who have opposed them. (Hear, hear.) Difference of opinion there must be on all great public questions. (Hear, hear.) It is idle to expect that we should all be agreed on this any more than on any other great public question; and after all, the most correct judgment, which can be formed on any occasion, is but an approximation to the truth. (Hear, hear.) All those who have preceded us in the work of constitution-making, have left, on the structures which they have erected, the impress of that attribute which prevades humanity—imperfection. We have a very lamentable instance of this in the case of our neighbors on the southern side of the line. As was well said, by a prominent member of the Government in another place, the Constitution of the United States “was one of the most wonderful works of the human intellect—one of the most marvellous efforts of skill and organization that ever governed a free people. But to say that it was perfect would be wrong.” The wonder is that men with the limited amount of experience which its authors possessed, should have framed such an instrument. It has stood many rude tests, and but for the existence in the social compact of our American friends, of an element in direct antagonism to the whole genius of their system—negro slavery—the Constitution of the United States would have continued to withstand—yes, and after the extinction of that element, will continue to withstand—all the artillery which their own or foreign despotism can array against it. Their institutions have the same features with our own. There are some points of variance; but the same great principle is the basis of both—that life, liberty and the

pursuit of happiness are the unalienable rights of man, and that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. This is the secret of the strength of the British Constitution, and without a free and full recognition of it, no government can be strong or permanent. I am free to admit that the scheme before us has some defects, which, in my judgment, will mar its well-working; but, at the same time, I am confident that, if it should become law, those defects can and will be remedied. The gentlemen composing a majority of the Conference, who were the authors of these resolutions, honestly thought that their views were right, but the time will come when they or their successors will see that they were wrong, and the errors will be rectified. We are told the resolutions must be either accepted or rejected. Therefore, the question which we must solve is, whether those defects are so serious as to render it our duty to reject them, or are the advantages likely to result from their adoption more than equivalent to the drawbacks. I hold that the substitution of appointment by the Crown for the elective principle, in this Chamber, is a great objection. I have always been an advocate of the elective principle; still I shrink from the responsibility of voting against the scheme because of that objection. (Hear, hear.) We had reached a condition almost bordering on anarchy; and I am sure from the conflict of passions that prevailed—and it is not my design to blame one political party or the other for it, I simply state a fact, freely conceded by both parties—that a state of things existed for which a remedy of some kind must be found. And it is a cheering fact that in the midst of this state of things we have found men patriotic enough to merge former differences and unite together for the purpose of framing a Constitution which will secure exemption from the evils under which we have labored. And although it may entail—I am not here to state that it will not entail—additional cost upon the country, yet that is not a valid argument against the adoption of the scheme. (Hear, hear.) The House and the country have to take this into consideration, whether, if it be rejected, we can devise a plan better fitted to extricate us from our present difficulties, and which will command the support of all the parties to this compact. It seems to be unnecessary to go into the discussion of the question as to