

should, if possible, be brought about without further loss of time. No one who had watched the course of public opinion in Great Britain in reference to the colonies, as expressed during the last few years, either in Parliament or in the public press, could doubt that the feeling had been gaining ground there that the time had come for us to assume a larger share than we had hitherto assumed of those responsibilities which attach to every country aspiring to any sort of national existence or political standing. He need scarcely say that he alluded to the question of defence. This was a question which would have been forced upon us sooner or later under any circumstances, because it was neither reasonable nor just that we should expect that Great Britain would continue to give us the protection of her fleets and armies, unless we showed that we were willing to bear our share of the burden, and were ready to contribute our quota of men and means towards the defence of our own hearths and homes should war unhappily threaten us. Under any circumstances, then, the consideration of this question must necessarily have occupied a large share of the attention of the Government and the Legislature, but no one would deny that it had acquired tenfold importance in view of our present relations with the United States, and that what might safely have been left to the unaided resources of Canada alone, had peace and harmony continued to prevail on our borders, would now require all the assistance, all the material aid and moral support, which a close and cordial union with nearly a million of our British fellow-subjects could alone give to us. Feeling then as he did upon these points, he could not help asking himself the question, what would be the result, as regards the well-being and prosperity of Canada, if this Confederation scheme should fall through? Should we not suffer most seriously in all our relations both at home and abroad? Would not the effect on our credit in England be most disastrous? Would they not say that our own folly and want of patriotism had condemned us to a state of isolation and weakness, when union with our sister provinces would have made us strong, powerful and prosperous? Some honorable gentlemen had such strong objections to some of the details of the measure—the alteration in the constitution of this House, for instance—that rather than bring themselves to vote for it, they were willing to run the risk of imperiling the whole scheme. For his own part, he thought it would ill become an elected member like himself to say

anything against the elective system as applied to this House; although he earnestly believed that the majority of his own constituents were in favor of a Legislative Council appointed by the Crown. As for the objection which had been urged that between an Upper House composed exclusively of life members, and an elective Lower House, there might be the danger of a direct collision in the event of one rejecting an important measure which the other had passed, he did not think there was much danger of such a contingency. Indeed he would remind honorable members that the only instance of anything like a dead-lock between the two Houses, which had occurred within late years, at all events, was since the introduction of the elective principle, when the Council in 1859 refused to pass the Supply Bill on account of certain items contained in it, providing for the expense of the removal of the Government to Quebec. The Government on that occasion were left in a minority in this House, although they had a majority in the Assembly, and it was only after an adjournment of some days and upon a reconsideration of the question, after bringing up some life members from Lower Canada, that the Government carried the vote by a majority of two or three. Upon the whole, however, he thought that the life members of the Council would admit that the elective members had so far, at all events, comported themselves in such a way as to maintain the character of the House as a conservative body, free from all violent party feeling, and exercising a wholesome check against all ill-considered or hasty legislation. The real danger, he thought, was that if the House in process of time were to become a purely elective body, and party lines became more closely drawn, the same partisan spirit which too often swayed the proceedings of the popular branch of the Legislature, might find its way into their chamber, larger powers, such as originating money bills, might be claimed, and a collision between the two Houses might then occur at any time. Another objection raised by some honorable gentlemen, was, that this measure was being urged upon the Parliament and people of this country with undue haste, and from the language of some honorable gentlemen it was quite clear that they did not think that our situation was by any means such a critical one as to call for any immediate change. For his own part, he did not understand how any one could look abroad at what was passing on our borders and not take into consideration the fact that our communica-