

whether union of the British North American Provinces is desirable. Every hon. gentleman who has spoken, has given his assent to that proposition. But objections have been urged against the resolutions before the House, and some of those objections have assumed a tangible shape. They have been presented in the amendments moved by my honorable friend from Wellington and by my hon. friend from Niagara. My vote shall be given for the resolutions, notwithstanding their defects, because I believe that the benefits which we shall derive from their adoption will far outweigh them. (Hear, hear.) We have been told that this scheme is new, that the country is not informed upon the subject, and that the people do not understand it. There was a time in the history of this country—and that time has not very long gone by—when this plan of government, or at any rate the leading principles embodied in it, were discussed and approved by a very large number of the people. In 1859, a numerous and respectable body representing the Reform party of Upper Canada, met in the city of Toronto. That convention was composed of, I think, 560 members, who substantially adopted it as the policy of the party. Among other resolutions which the convention agreed to were two which I shall take the liberty of reading to the House. The 4th resolution was to the following effect:—

That without entering on the discussion of other objections, this assembly is of opinion that the delay which must occur in obtaining the sanction of the Lower Provinces to a Federal union of all the British North American Colonies, places that measure beyond consideration as a remedy for present evils.

The object of this resolution was clearly not to ignore the larger project of Confederation of all the British North American Provinces, and I think I shall be able to convince the House, from what fell from myself on that occasion, that it was not so considered. But the difficulties then surrounding us were of a grave character and an immediate remedy was desired; and, as the resolution expresses it, the obstacle in the way of a Federal union of all the provinces, and which prevented its acceptance as an immediate remedy, was the delay which would necessarily occur in obtaining the consent of the Lower Provinces. But the 5th resolution adopted at that meeting embodied in it some of the main features of

the resolutions of the Conference. It runs thus:—

That in the opinion of this assembly the best practicable remedy for the evils now encountered in the Government of Canada is to be found in the formation of two or more local governments, to which shall be committed the control of all matters of a local or sectional character, and some joint authority, charged with such matters as are necessarily common to both sections of the province.

HON. MR. ROSS—Or, in other words, there was a hope at that time that Confederation would be accomplished. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—Yes; and I was going on to show that that was the sense in which I and others in that body viewed the resolution at the time; and my hon. friend from the Niagara Division was a member of the convention. I shall quote from a speech I made upon that occasion, which will show at all events the sense in which I regarded the resolution I have just read. It is sometimes an advantage in advocating measures to have no embarrassing antecedents. This is my lot on this occasion, or I should, perhaps, have been reminded of them by my hon. friend from Niagara. It will be remembered by those who were present at the meeting, that Mr. SHEPPARD moved a resolution, in amendment, affirming the propriety of dissolving the union between Upper and Lower Canada; but in doing so, he said, that if our object was to establish a large nationality, he would withdraw it, and support the main resolution. In reply to him I said:—

Mr. SHEPPARD has stated that if he could see that the tendency was towards the acquisition of a national existence, then he was with us; he could see the propriety of a course of that kind. Now I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that such is its tendency, and that that man is blind to the future of this country, nay, more, that he is not a true patriot, who does not believe that some day or other this great British North American continent will have a nationality. I think every man, looking at the history of the past and judging from that what may be the history of the future of this country, must feel that one day or other—and this, perhaps, at no very distant period—we shall have a great North American nationality. It is no part of our scheme that there shall not be a Federation of all the British North American Provinces. We admit the possibility of that in one of the resolutions already passed, but we say that we cannot afford to wait for it, for the extravagance of our present system is so great that the country cannot stand it much longer. With regard to dissolution of the union,