

derstood very well what the word "Private" meant. (Hear, hear.) I was invited to attend a very large meeting, comprising nearly all the leading merchants in Montreal, just after the delegates left for home. We spent a whole night over it; I believe it was early in the morning before we parted. A third part of those present, I think, came apparently determined to oppose the scheme. Fortunately we had a gentleman there who had made himself thoroughly acquainted with it, and who was able to go into explanations and deal with all the whys and wherefores that were urged by the various objectors. The result was, that when we closed the meeting there was only one man who declared himself positively opposed to the scheme—(hear, hear,)—and this man said he opposed it, because, in his opinion, it would give the French Canadians power to crush us British out of the Lower Provinces. I maintain, honorable gentlemen, that the public opinion of Canada is not opposed to the scheme of Confederation. (Hear, hear.) If it had been so, we should have petitions against it poured in upon us from every quarter. I do not think the scheme is perfect, but we should try with an honest purpose to work it out, and if it is found defective, it is not, of course, like the laws of the Medes and Persians—it can be altered. We have had the Constitution of 1841 altered more than once—twice at least—since the union. If we find that some parts of the machinery do not work—if, after the establishment of the Confederation, we find some little error has been made—we will then, no doubt, have power and authority also to alter it. I trust this scheme of Federation will be carried by a large majority in this House, as well as in the Legislative Assembly, and that the legislatures of the Lower Provinces will also adopt it. If so, honorable gentlemen, we shall enter on a new era in the history of British North America. (Hear, hear.) I believe that a Divine Providence guides the destinies of nations, and I believe a Divine Providence has directed the statesmen who were present at that Conference in their deliberations, and has brought conflicting interests into harmony in a most wonderful way. (Hear, hear.) What was our political condition on the fourteenth of June last—only about eight months ago? What was our political condition then, and what brought the leaders of the political parties who were then fiercely contending with each other, almost as

in a death struggle, for power, into relations of intimate friendship? What led the Governments of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island to send their leading statesmen, representatives of both their political parties, to meet our Coalition Government? I say it was an over-ruling Providence. A party government could never have arrived at such a scheme of union as this. If we reject this proposed Confederation, we refuse to lay the foundations of a great nation, as a dependency of the British Empire. When I came of age I considered what country I should adopt. I adopted Canada. I have now lived in it for forty-four years. I have been identified with the progress of its institutions—of those at any rate of Lower Canada, and particularly of Montreal. I have had the pleasure of taking part with others in organizing some of them. I have seen some of them prosper, and others that will probably fail, as we may expect will be the case in a new country. I have, during these years also, travelled over a large part of Europe. I have travelled too over parts of Asia and Africa. I have seen people under monarchical governments—some of them tolerably prosperous, others of them less so. I have seen people under despotic governments—some of them pretty comfortable, and others crushed down to the lowest depths of slavery. I have seen republican governments in Europe, and of course I have seen the great Republic here on this continent. I have seen people, too, living under the government of the Church. But I have seen no people like those living under the government of Great Britain, or enjoying such perfect freedom, and such complete protection for life and property, as those living under the flag of Old England. (Hear, hear.) And had I my choice to make to-day, after an experience of forty-four years, I should still choose Canada as my home. I feel that at my age I have not long to live; but, during the time that I shall be spared on earth, I would be willing to devote all my energies to the carrying out of this scheme—and I do pray it may succeed—because it is laying anew the foundations of one of the most important dependencies of the British Empire. I trust I shall not live to see it in any other condition than as a dependency of the British Empire. Honorable gentlemen, I shall have pleasure in voting for the resolutions of the honorable and gallant Knight. (Cheers.)