

in my humble way. But believing the nostrum they are about to administer will aggravate the evil rather than cure or alleviate it, I feel it to be a duty I owe to my constituents and to my own conscience to vote against the scheme, be the consequences what they may. (Cheers.)

DR. PARKER—MR. SPEAKER, before the debate closes, I desire to make a few observations in explanation of the vote it is my intention to record on this question. I shall not trespass on the indulgence of the House, but will compress in a few sentences the explanations I desire to make. It is pretty well within the knowledge of the House that I entertain strong objections to the Address on the table—not only objections of principle, but detail—objections not only as an Upper Canadian, but as a British North American, and objections as to the time and manner in which it is sought to give to these resolutions the force of law. If it was possible to propose or secure certain changes, I would make them or warmly support them. The motion of the “previous question” by the leader of the Government precludes all amendments; for it I am not responsible, but by it I am forced to give a yea or nay vote on the Address as it now stands. I have no choice but to accept or reject these resolutions as a whole. If I could take the responsibility of the latter, I would state my objections to the basis of Confederation fully, perhaps strongly. I refrain from this expression, because, under the circumstances to which I have alluded, it would serve no good end or purpose. It has been persistently urged during this debate that the opponents of this measure should propound a better. A sufficient answer to that argument is, that they are not allowed to do so. But aside from this, the opponents of a public measure are not always called upon to submit an alternative proposition, but may stand on their strict logical and parliamentary right of proposing nothing and conceding nothing, not even attempting to prove the particular measure to which they are opposed bad, but that its supporters have not proved it to be good. Upon all questions of ordinary magnitude and importance from which I dissented, I would feel justified by that answer. But, sir, this is not a question of ordinary magnitude and importance; our domestic and external difficulties are pressing and importunate, and I feel in rejecting this measure, I am bound

morally and in duty to the country and the people I represent, to see my way to something better. On this part of the issue I am entirely with the Government. I believe the period has arrived when it is necessary to remodel our institutions, even for the purpose of conducting the civil government of the country. The time has come when it is necessary to carry some measure of constitutional reform. The public opinion of the country—all the events of the last year—the reconstruction of the present Administration* expressly to settle this question, places us in a position whence we can neither recede nor stand still. The *status quo* is impossible. Under these circumstances, the practical question is—Can a better measure than that now before us be secured? Better measures could, perhaps, have been devised, but it is doubtful if they would have secured general concurrence or be carried. The only question, however, I have to determine is, that under the necessities of the time and the restriction from all choice—for neither of which I am in any way responsible—I can see my way to nothing better, and I have therefore determined to record my vote for these resolutions. (Hear, hear) Conceding, as I honestly do, the necessity of constitutional changes, I accept this as the only practical measure at the present time. If I could see a reasonable probability of securing anything better, I would vote otherwise. But from some of the remarks made by leading members in opposition to this Address, the changes which they would probably propose I could under no circumstances support; because then, sir, circumstances, over which I have no control, make this the only practicable change possible; and, as the necessity is urgent, I accept these resolutions as a necessity of the time and situation. In voting for this Address, however, I reserve to myself the right of judgment on every question in these resolutions, which may hereafter become the subject of deliberation in Parliament, should I have the honor to hold a seat in this House. In voting for these resolutions, I hold myself in no way committed to any proposed improvement; and will vote on them, and particularly the Intercolonial Railway, as though they were in no way mentioned in these resolutions. Should this measure fail, either in the House of Commons or by the persistent refusal of the Maritime Provinces to