

may venture to assert that there are not many honorable members in the House stronger in their constituencies than I am—if I were to come before my electors purely on the Confederation issue, and as the advocate of Confederacy, I know that denunciation of the 68th resolution would be a tower of strength in the hands of any anti-Confederate opponent who might choose to measure swords with me in the electoral field; but I would be prepared to face that difficulty, and in the fullest confidence that I could do so successfully and triumphantly, if satisfied that I could—and I think I could—show to my people that the scheme of Confederation, even with the Intercolonial Railway inseparately interwoven in its web, is essential to our existence as a British people. (Hear, hear.) Reverting to the objectionable features I have alluded to in the resolutions before us, I have asked myself this question—Is Confederation, as offered to us, faulty, as the plan may be likely to work well for the future of the country? Is it likely to prove a satisfactory solution of the very grave political difficulties that beset us? It would be in vain to attempt to conceal from ourselves that Canada is at this moment approaching the most critical period of her hitherto existence. Threatened with aggression from without, we are not in a gratifying condition of prosperity within, let blue books and census returns say what they will to the contrary. Great and momentous events are transpiring just beyond our frontier—events which have already seriously and injuriously affected us commercially, and which must inevitably, in some way or other, affect us politically. A people until recently devoted only to industrial pursuits and the development of their country, have suddenly expanded into a great military power. To use their own expression, the Americans are “making history very fast,” and it is impossible that that eventful history can be manufactured in a territory separated from our own by little more than an imaginary line, without our having eventually some part in its pages, for good or for evil. In fact we cannot conceal from ourselves that some great change is impending over the destinies of our country—a change that will present itself to us in some form or other, and that before long, without its being in our power to avert, though it may be in our power to shape it. There is fast growing up in England a feeling of want of confidence in Canada. We

see it in the tone of the press, in the parliamentary debates and elsewhere. We are told that we are giving more trouble to the Mother Country than we are worth. A similar feeling of want of confidence, amounting almost to contempt, has always prevailed towards us in the United States. The ignorance of everything relating to Canada—of our political and social condition—of our resources and our commerce—our growth and our progress—that exists among our kindred across the border, cannot fail to have surprised those who have mingled much among them, and if not altogether creditable to them is certainly very humiliating to us; but, great as the ignorance is there, it is fully equalled by that which exists with respect to Canada, and all pertaining to Canada, among our nearer and dearer kindred in the old world. What can we do to remedy this unfortunate and humiliating state of things? What can we do to inspire confidence in us abroad; to command respect; to defy contempt? These appear to me to be the practical questions with which we have to deal. We are plainly told by England that we must rely more upon our own resources in the future than we have done in the past, and it is right and just we should do so. It appears to me that there are just three states of political existence possible for us here, when we emerge from the chrysalis-form in which we have hitherto existed. First, there is the attempt to stand alone as a separate nationality on this continent—that is one alternative. Secondly, there is the prospect held out to us in the resolutions—namely, a union of all the British North American Colonies, under the flag of England, becoming more and more every year a homogeneous British people, and building up a consolidated British power on this continent. The last and inevitable alternative, if we reject the other two, is exactly that stated by my honorable friend from South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS)—absorption into the United States. It is in vain to shut our eyes to that fact, or that the time is at hand when we will have to make our selection. I know that the latter alternative—and I can speak from as thorough an acquaintance with the wants, feelings and wishes of the people of Canada as any honorable gentleman in this House possesses—would be most distasteful to the great mass of the people of this country. (Loud cheers.) To myself personally, it would be so distasteful that it