

involving a dissolution of Parliament, if they chose, but that they, nevertheless, hesitated to exercise the power; that while individual changes might be made in the constituencies, the two great parties would come back nearly the same; and added, that he had had an interview with the hon. member for South Oxford (Hon. Mr. BROWN) of a most satisfactory nature, from which he thought he saw a solution of our difficulties, and asked an adjournment of the House. Subsequently, interviews were had between the members of the Government and the member for South Oxford, which resulted in the present Coalition Government. Sir, after a full consideration of the subject in all its bearings, I decided to give the new Government my support, trusting they would be able, as I believed they desired, to put the affairs of this country on a more satisfactory and enduring basis. But, while I support this Government, I must not be understood as approving of coalitions generally. I hold that to a country enjoying representative institutions and responsible government, it is indeed a matter of very little consequence which of the political parties are in power, so long as there is a strong party to scrutinise their acts, and exercise a general surveillance over them. When, however, the two great parties coalesce, and there is no strong party in the country to watch them, there is more or less danger of abuses and corruption creeping in. I do not, however, desire that the gentlemen on the Treasury benches should understand that I apply this remark to them. They, sir, I believe, are not only pure, but, like CÆSAR'S wife, above suspicion. And, if even a necessity existed in any country to justify a coalition, it was in Canada; and I rejoice to know that we had statesmen among us who could rise above the petty political and personal squabbles, in which they had been unfortunately too long engaged, to grapple with a great national difficulty. (Cheers.) I think, too, it was most fortunate—providential, I might say—that this country had a strong, vigorous Government during the past season, when complications between us and the United States were gathering. To the strength of the Government we owe the prompt manner in which raiders and others, desirous of creating a difficulty between England and America, were put down. (Hear, hear.) Mr. SPEAKER, I have read the resolutions of the Conference, now in

your hands, carefully; and while, in my opinion, many of the details are objectionable, from an Upper Canadian point of view, I have, nevertheless, no doubt they were framed with a desire to do justice to all the provinces. No person can read those resolutions without coming to the conclusion that mutual concessions must have been made all round. They clearly bear the impress of compromise. No doubt, sir, much difficulty was experienced by the gentlemen composing the Conference, in fitting and dovetailing the heterogeneous parts or provinces into a homogeneous whole. I have listened attentively to the speeches of the Opposition, and have so far failed to hear of a better proposition than the one before us; and, indeed, I am not surprised that a better proposition should not have been presented to us, considering that this scheme was compiled by the master minds in British America. (Hear, hear.) I stated, sir, that some of the details were objectionable, and I now repeat that had the Government permitted amendments to the resolutions, I certainly would have supported them; but in view of the very critical position in which this country stands, I will not assume the responsibility of opposing this scheme as a whole. (Hear, hear.) Although I admit the building of the Intercolonial Railroad to be just as necessary to the proposed Confederation as the spinal column to the human frame; nevertheless, in view of the jobbing and extravagance committed with the Grand Trunk, I have a dread of the amount its construction and working will cost this country. Sir, I am not as sanguine as some honorable gentlemen in this House in reference to this road. I have no faith in it as a commercial enterprise; I look upon it as a military necessity, and a bond of union between the Confederate Provinces. Sir, we have been told that the Imperial Government has been notified of the intention of the Government of the United States to abrogate the Reciprocity treaty. To my mind this will be most unfortunate for Canada, and I sincerely trust that the members of the Government who will shortly visit England will urge the Imperial Government to secure a renewal of it, if it can be obtained on honorable terms. While hoping this treaty may be renewed, I do not participate in the feeling that its abrogation will drive us into the United States. (Hear, hear.) Sir, I regret to hear