

HON. MR. BROWN—Hear, hear !

MR. A. MACKENZIE—And, as soon as our former political friends in Lower Canada ceased to take advanced ground on that question, while the other party, hitherto opposed to us, became willing to take that advanced ground, it became clearly our duty to unite with that party who held opinions in common with us on matters that concerned us above all others. (Hear, hear.) At the time of the formation of the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Government, I was, with many others, strongly blamed, because we allowed that Government to come into existence at all. It is quite possible we were wrong; but I think after all it was fortunate that the hon. member for Cornwall (Hon. J. S. MACDONALD) had a fair opportunity to try his favorite remedy for our constitutional difficulties—the “double majority principle.” That principle had been pressed on the attention of the country for ten years as one amply sufficient as a remedial measure, under which the existing political system could be harmoniously worked. In the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Government it had a fair trial and a speedy death. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) The existence of that Government, if it served no other purpose, showed the utter impracticability of the one means, by which my hon. friend hoped to accomplish what he, in common with ourselves, had long aimed at. (Hear, hear. Now, supposing the Liberal party of the west had refused the terms offered by the present Administration—if we had declined to support a government which was really giving us nearly all we demanded—I do think we would have been fairly chargeable with creating if not advocating a state of anarchy. I think it would have been a most suicidal thing, if, having obtained—if not to the full extent, yet to a very great extent—the concession of the principle we had contended for so long, we had refused to accept the settlement offered, merely because a certain number of gentlemen, to whom we had been strongly opposed before, were among the leaders of the new movement. I for one felt it would be quite impossible for me to maintain my ground in Canada West, if I took the responsibility of acting in that way. Some honorable gentlemen have asserted, and truly asserted, that this measure is not as perfect as it might have been—and that it is not as complete as some of us might have desired it to be. It is not perhaps, consider-

ing everything, in the exact form in which we demanded it. But, where there are two great parties in a nation—as there have been with us—it is quite clear that, when they agree to effect a settlement of the constitutional difficulties which have separated them, this can only be accomplished by mutual compromise to a greater or less extent. And the true question to be determined in this discussion, and by the vote at the close of this debate, is this—whether this a fair compromise or not. I am prepared to say it is perhaps as fair as could reasonably be expected, and I have therefore no hesitation in giving it all the support in my power. (Hear, hear.) In its main features it is the very scheme which was proposed by the Toronto Convention—only carried to a greater extent than the convention thought advisable or possible at the time. The speeches which were delivered at that convention, as well as the resolutions which were passed, shewed clearly that it was the opinion of the delegates there present, that a Confederation of the whole provinces would be desirable, if it were possible to attain it as speedily, as they expected they could obtain a Federation of the two Provinces of Canada. That, I believe, was the sole reason why resolutions were not moved and adopted in favor of the larger instead of the smaller scheme. But we have been told by the two hon. gentlemen beside me—the hon. member for Chateaugay (Hon. Mr. HOLTON) and the honorable member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. DORION)—that the scheme of the Toronto Convention took no hold upon the public mind. As to this I have to say that having had as fair an opportunity perhaps as most men to ascertain the feelings of the people in Western Canada, I can assert, without any fear of contradiction by hon. gentlemen from that part of the country, that no scheme ever took a greater or more complete hold upon the public mind in Upper Canada than the scheme of the Toronto Convention. (Hear, hear.) And for the very reason that the present scheme is merely an expansion of that one, it has received almost universal approval in Canada West. (Hear, hear.) It is true that after the Toronto Convention was held, there was not any very strong agitation in its favor. But I have observed this, that at all the elections which have been held subsequent to the convention, gentlemen who have taken the same side of politics as myself have been accustomed to say that as soon as the Lower