

construction would be of no advantage to Canada; but the course of events has convinced me that the time has now arrived when we should take upon ourselves our fair share of the expense of constructing this important work. It cannot be satisfactory to any Canadian, on going to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, to find that he is a stranger in a strange country, and among a people who, though living so close to Canada, have no commercial intercourse with us. Although they are neighbors of ours, in one respect, yet they are neighbors with whom we have no intercourse. It is very desirable that the barriers to our intercourse should be removed, and the construction of the Intercolonial Railway is, in my opinion, the only effectual means of removing them. Mr. SPEAKER, it has been argued by a great many of those who have taken part in debating this subject that this House is assuming for itself a power that it does not, or ought not to possess, in disposing of the question without submitting it to the popular will. It is said that before these resolutions take effect an expression of public opinion should be had through a general election: Some of those honorable gentlemen who have taken this position have stated as a reason for advocating that course that the public mind was not yet properly informed as to the effect of the proposed change, and that, therefore, time should be given until public opinion is prepared to decide upon it. But with a strange inconsistency those same gentlemen are flooding this House with petitions from the electors, not asking for delay, not asking for further time to consider the matter, but asking that the scheme be not adopted. They in effect show by their petitions that they have considered the subject—that they know all about it—that their opinions are fully formed—and that the measure ought not to be adopted. Either the public mind is fully ripe for the adoption or rejection of the scheme, or else those electors are signing petitions without having sufficient information on which to base the opinions they express. But, sir, there is such a thing as obtaining public opinion on almost any question, and very correctly too, without going to the polls; and, for my part, I find elections very inconvenient. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I believe the majority of the electors of Upper Canada have read those resolutions, and understand them about as well as many members of this House; and,

sir, we have every reason to believe that the sentiment of Upper Canada at least is largely in favor of the adoption of this scheme. (Hear, hear.) I took occasion to consult my constituents before coming to this House on the present occasion. I held meetings in the various municipalities in the county, and I believe, sir, according to the best of my ability, I did submit this scheme to the electors of that portion of the province. I have heard a good deal said here about the importance of having the question submitted to a vote of the people.

MR. M. C. CAMERON—I would like to ask the gentleman whether he laid any figures before his people to shew the difference between the cost of a Legislative and a Federal union. Unless he did that, the people were not in a position to express an opinion as to what was best for their interests.

MR. WALSH—I did not submit figures to shew the difference in cost between a Federal or Legislative union, for the simple reason that until the organization of the local governments is decided upon, it is not possible to give reliable figures, and I therefore think the people as competent to make calculations on this subject as myself or my hon. friend, lawyer though he be. (Hear, hear.) I may say, however, in answer to the hon. gentleman, that I did state to my constituents that the resolutions now under consideration place in the hands of the present Legislature the preparation of the constitutions and the organization and composition of the local governments of Upper and Lower Canada; and that as the Federal Government is to pay an annual subsidy of eighty cents per head of its population to the respective provinces, for carrying on their local governments and the construction of local works, any sum required over and above that subsidy must necessarily be raised by direct taxation, and in that fact we have the strongest possible guarantee that in the arrangements made by this Legislature, and in the subsequent management of their domestic affairs by the local governments, the strictest simplicity and economy will be observed. (Hear, hear.) So much, Mr. SPEAKER, in answer to the question of the hon. gentleman. The difference between us on this question being that whilst we are both advocates of a legislative union, he will accept none other. I, believing that unattainable at present, am prepared to accept