

lative union, which is the description of union into which I trust to see the present imperfect Constitution, or proposed Constitution, eventually merge. For the reasons stated I have looked upon this Federal scheme of union with dislike and distrust. But the promoters of the scheme, most of whom, it must be admitted, have appeared here rather as its apologists than as its upholders, tell us that it is a necessity of circumstances, an unavoidable consequence of difference in language, laws and local interests between Upper and Lower Canada on the one part, and an absence of community of local interests between us here in Canada and the Maritime Provinces on the other hand. The latter part of the argument is undoubtedly correct; but, admitting the whole of the premises, for argument sake, the other question naturally suggests itself: Is Confederation, even in the faulty form in which it is laid before us, to be accepted as a likely remedy for the evils under which we now labor in Canada, and as a possible antidote against the greater evils which threaten us in the near future? I would answer that question in my own way, and from my own point of view by and by; meanwhile I would ask to be permitted to say a word in respect of the financial phase of the Confederation project; and upon that point I feel it difficult to agree with my hon. friend the Hon. Finance Minister, in assuming that the joint expenses of the two local governments here in Canada may be kept so much below what we are now paying for our single form of government, as to leave a wide margin towards defraying, if not wholly to cover, our proportion of the expenses of the General Government. I can hardly venture to take such a *couleur-de-rose* view of our position as that. I will not weary the House with estimates and figures, which, after all, can be but problematical and conjectural; but I would venture to predict that under our new condition of existence, with its *quasi* national obligations, our expenditure must increase largely beyond the present limits that we have hitherto been accustomed to. I believe that to be an inevitable result of the Confederation; but I also believe that there is a future looming upon us—Confederation or no Confederation—which will involve us in duties and responsibilities which we must not shirk—which, in fact, we cannot shirk if we would. The signs of the times are not to be

mistaken, and I fear we have an expensive future before us for some time to come. But if, in bringing about a union of all these provinces, we were in reality laying the sure foundation of social, commercial, and political prosperity—if we felt that in reality we were laying the ground-work, as it were, of a new nation on this continent—we might justly, along with the great benefits we bequeath to posterity—benefits which we, in our generation, cannot hope to enjoy in their fulness—bequeath to them also the financial burden which would seem to be the ordained and inevitable accompaniment of progressive nationality. And if I felt assured in my own mind that this measure of Confederation, faulty as it is, promised even a fair chance for successfully solving a great political difficulty, I for one would not fear to take my share of the responsibility of increasing the expenses of government and adding to the debt of the country. I have alluded to the expenses attendant on Confederation as being, to a certain extent, conjectural and problematical; but there is one item of its cost which is not of that character. The Intercolonial Railway is a vital part of the Confederation project—the latter could have no useful, practical existence without the former. As a commercial undertaking, the Intercolonial Railway presents no attractions, it offers no material for a flattering prospectus; we could not invite to it the attention of European capitalists as presenting an eligible investment for their surplus funds. But for the establishing of those intimate social and commercial relations indispensable to political unity between ourselves and the sister provinces, the railway is a necessity. It will, therefore, have to be undertaken and paid for purely as a national work, and it is right that the people of Canada should know and understand in the outset what the probable addition to our public debt would be in connection with the 68th resolution. I do not think the proportion of the cost of the railway falling to the share of Canada can be much short of what we have already given towards the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway—at all events from twelve to fourteen millions of dollars. If it shall come about that the sense of the people is to be taken on the Confederation question, the Intercolonial Railway feature in the plan will prove the most difficult to reconcile the people to, and especially the people of Upper Canada. In my own constituency—and I