

listened, sir, with great attention to the speeches which have fallen from honorable gentlemen on both sides; and it is to me a matter of congratulation to observe, that at last, something has arisen which has given a higher tone to the debates of this House, and to the utterances of our public men. (Hear, hear.) I attribute this improvement in a great measure to the fact that we are discussing a question of greater importance than has ever before been brought under our consideration; that we are at length turning our attention to something worthy of the consideration of gentlemen who aspire to establish for themselves the reputation of statesmen, while it has unfortunately happened heretofore that too much of our time has been spent in discussing questions which ought properly to be left to the consideration of a municipal, rather than of a legislative body. (Hear, hear.) Inasmuch, sir, as I have reasons, which perhaps are somewhat peculiar to myself, for entertaining the views which I hold upon this question, I trust I may be pardoned if I refer to some of the most prominent events connected with the progress of affairs in Canada for some years past. And here I may remark, that though the country has become more important, though our population has increased, and our prosperity advanced, in perhaps as rapid a degree as any reasonable person could have expected, there are still some respects in which we have not advanced, but rather retrograded than otherwise. I mean that the tone of feeling among the prominent men of the country has rather deteriorated than improved, since the introduction of responsible government. I, sir, am old-fashioned enough to believe, that although there may have been some objections to the mode of government which existed prior to the union, there was a higher tone among our public men in those days than has prevailed for some years past. Still, no doubt, there was much cause of complaint on the part of those who originated the agitation, which resulted in the rebellion of 1837. And speaking now in the light of the experience, many of us would probably be prepared to admit those gentlemen who took a prominent part in bringing about that rebellion, and whom we then considered it a duty to put down, were in reality true benefactors of the country. (Hear, hear.) The result has proved that they differed only from those who

thought it their duty to oppose them, in that they were in advance of the men and the sentiment of that day. They foresaw, indeed, earlier than their neighbors, that the state of things which then existed could not long continue—they appreciated grievances sooner than others. (Hear, hear.) And thence arose the political struggles, which resulted, unfortunately, in a resort to arms. That insurrection was happily suppressed; and the statesmen of the great nation of which we are proud to be subjects, after the rebellion was ended, immediately applied themselves to the consideration of the best means of removing the just causes of complaint which had led to the revolt. The first step was to bring about a union of the two provinces. That union was distasteful to many, who were forced reluctantly to accede to it. There were at that time gentlemen worthy in every way of the respect of their fellow-countrymen who denounced the union, and predicted evil results from it. But is there an intelligent man in this country who will now say that those predictions have been realized? I do not think there is an honorable member of this House, on either side, who would expect anybody to believe he spoke sincerely if he asserted that the union had been attended by disastrous results. The time has passed for hostile feelings to exist between the people of the two sections of this country—I say the two sections, for I have never allowed myself to speak of Upper and Lower Canada as separate and distinct provinces or countries, as has been too much the practice. From the moment the union was consummated, I felt that we should look upon ourselves as inhabitants of one country, and not as the people of two distinct provinces. In some instances legislation might operate with greater advantage to one section, while in others it would be more beneficial to the other section. But whatever was for the benefit of one was for the good of the whole, inasmuch as it added to the importance, the wealth and the influence of the whole. (Hear, hear.) But there were many people who, for many years after the consummation of the union, writhed under the state of things thereby brought about, and were disposed to sneer at responsible government, and to speak of it as a misfortune rather than as a boon. Sir, we have had some severe lessons, such as all individuals passing through the period intervening between childhood and manhood must to