

which has been placed in your hands. (Cheers.)

HON. MR. McDOUGALL—I am not surprised, Mr. SPEAKER, that honorable gentlemen who are opposed to the policy of the Government on this question, and desirous of overthrowing it, should feel a little disappointment at the course that has been announced to-day. But I cannot understand how honorable gentlemen who are friendly to that policy, and desire that it should prevail, should, at this stage of the discussion, find fault with the course of proceeding which we have felt it our duty to propose. Sir, we have been discussing this question now for nearly four weeks, and I am sure no honorable member will venture to deny that the discussion has, for the last ten days, dragged very heavily; that there has been a marked disinclination on the part of honorable gentlemen opposite to go on with it.

HON. MR. DORION—No, no.

HON. MR. McDOUGALL—The honorable gentleman says “No,” but the fact is that adjournments have been moved several times as early as half-past nine o’clock, because no honorable gentleman was ready or inclined to speak against the measure.

HON. MR. DORION—Only once, and that on account of the illness of the honorable member for Brome.

HON. MR. McDOUGALL—The honorable gentleman is mistaken. On another occasion the honorable member for Hochelaga himself moved the adjournment at an early hour, because his friends were not ready to go on with the discussion, and hon. members who were in favor of the scheme have several times been obliged to speak, when they were not disposed to do so, in order to fill up the time and drag the discussion along. Well, sir, the Honorable Attorney General West stated to the House yesterday, in such terms that no one could have misunderstood him, that the Government felt it to be their duty to avail themselves of every parliamentary expedient for the purpose of ascertaining the opinion of this House upon the question as promptly as possible. To-day the announcement has been repeated, and good and sufficient reasons given for the adoption of this policy. The hon. members for Carleton and for North Ontario complain that there has been a departure from the usual practice of this House in making this motion, and charge us with stifling discussion; but these honorable gentlemen surely do not need to be informed that this motion does not stop the debate. The House can discuss the “pre-

vious question” to any extent. Strictly, perhaps, honorable members are limited to giving reasons why the question should not now be put, but among those reasons are all the arguments yet to be adduced, *pro* and *con*, on the main motion.

MR. POWELL—Then what good will it do?

HON. MR. McDOUGALL—The good it will do is this: it will prevent factious and irrelevant amendments, and enable us to get a decisive expression of the opinion of the House upon the real question before it. (Hear, hear.) It is all very well for the honorable member for North Ontario to tell us that he wishes to propose his scheme of a legislative union, with local legislation controlled by the members of each province; but sir, it happens that he occupies a seat on that side of the House, and not on this. It is the duty of the Government, who are responsible to Parliament and to the people, to propose their measures, and if the honorable gentleman can convince the House that those measures are not adapted to the circumstances and interests of the country, we shall be obliged to leave this side of the House, and then the honorable gentleman from North Ontario can come over here and submit his scheme to Parliament. (Hear, hear.) But as we are here, and have taken it upon us to submit these resolutions, we are determined to obtain as early as possible (without, however, preventing any honorable member from expressing his views upon them) a vote of this House. The outcry raised by gentlemen opposite against the propositions of the Government to facilitate the discussion by giving the whole time of the House to it, proves that delay is their real object. If they have any arguments to offer against the scheme, they have had ample opportunity to present them. They have thought proper to talk of everything but the merits or demerits of the scheme itself, until the patience of this House, and I think also of the country, is exhausted. I am happy to believe that a very considerable majority of the members of this House are ready and willing to vote yea on the question, and they ought not to be any longer detained from doing so, especially in view of circumstances that have arisen on this as well as on the other side of the Atlantic, to which my colleague the Hon. Attorney General has already directed the attention of the House.

HON. MR. EVANTUREL—I understood that the Government had stated that the question of Confederation was an open one.