

is similar at the present time. I believe that it is really the desire, the object and the aim of our neighbors ultimately, whether by force of arms or by the course they have recently adopted, to bring us into the American union. By crippling our resources, by destroying our trade and by threatening us with invasion, they hope to bring about, sooner or later, a feeling of dissatisfaction among the people of Canada and a desire for union. There is no question that, unless we take proper steps, the people of Canada will become dissatisfied. By union with the Lower Provinces, it is evident that we will be enabled to increase our trade to the amount of five or six millions of dollars, which is of itself a very strong inducement, aside from the other considerations that I have alluded to. I believe there are many members of this House in favor of the scheme, but who look upon it as so large a question that it ought, they say, to be submitted to a vote of the people. (Hear, hear.) It has been said by several members, and by the honorable gentleman who preceded me—"Shall we take away the rights of the people? Shall we enter upon a scheme of this importance without allowing them a voice? Have there been any petitions in favor of this scheme?" (Hear, hear.) That would certainly appear an argument that had great force; but if we take into consideration the effect of the agitation of any question in this House upon which the people feel strongly, we have a right to ask why has not a single petition been presented against it? We have the effect of this question well illustrated in the introduction, by the honorable member for West Brant, of a railway bill. That question the people of Western Canada have very strong feelings upon, and I think they have good reasons for it. We scarcely find that measure placed on the records of this House before we have petitions from all sections of the west, denouncing the bill as an attack upon the liberties of the people. They fear the power that it proposes to place in the hands of the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Now, if the people of Canada object to this great scheme—and it has been placed before them in almost every light—the resolutions have been printed in almost every paper in Canada—months have been given for their consideration, and the whole subject has been placed before them in an eloquent manner by several of the honorable members of the Government—why have they not petitioned against it? The fact that they have not done so shows that they almost

unanimously acquiesce in what is being done. Since the Government pledged themselves to bring down a scheme for Confederation, the subject has been brought before nearly fifty constituencies in Canada, either by elections or by its being submitted to the consideration of the people by honorable members of this House, and the people of Upper Canada, at least, have in no instance voted disapproval of it. (Cries of "No, no.")

MR. A. MACKENZIE—At a large and popular meeting held in Toronto, a few evenings ago, only one man could be found to vote against it.

HON. MR. BROWN—Since the present Government was formed, and its policy announced, there has not been one election contest in which more or less importance was not attached by one candidate or another to this question. There have been no fewer than fifty-one constituencies, or portions of constituencies, appealed to since our policy was placed before the country, and in every instance that policy has been sustained. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

MR. MCGIVERIN—I feel that I am at perfect liberty to support this measure. Perhaps I was the first to agitate and to lay the question before the people of the west in my own county. I stated to the people that I was in favor of representation according to population as a principle of justice, but that I believed that that question could be settled, and with it all our difficulties could be arranged by means of the larger project of the union of all the provinces. Many honorable gentlemen who oppose this scheme freely admit the importance of some change, but they have not proposed any substitute that would improve the scheme. I am satisfied that if the question were brought before the people of Canada, side issues, political and personal feeling and party questions would enter more largely into its consideration than Federation itself, and that therefore a correct verdict might not be obtained. I have endeavored to inform myself as to the precedents for submitting such a question to the people, and I have failed to find one precedent in its favor, while I have found several in favor of the method of dealing with it as proposed by the Government. The first I shall take the liberty of reading is from HANSARD, volume 85, as follows:—

At the time Sir R. PEEL proposed the change in the repeal of the corn laws to a House of Commons which had been elected in the interests of their maintenance, it was urged that he should have