

something delusive and perishable; for, as the honorable member for Peel and other honorable members who advocate this measure say, it is only a temporary expedient to tide us over our difficulties—a scheme of union to serve for the present, and not intended to endure for all time. (Hear, hear.) We are not, in fact, building up the frame-work of a Constitution that is to stand for ever, but something that we will have to tinker up from time to time, till we at length succeed either in destroying it altogether or making it a passably fair erection. (Hear, hear.) It appears to me, sir, that when this country was given responsible government—when the people of Canada were taught the lesson that they were henceforth to exercise the right of thinking for themselves—it is a sort of rude interference with that right when a certain number of gentlemen from Canada enter into a contract with certain other gentlemen from the Lower Provinces—thirty-three in number altogether—sign that contract, and then declare that the representatives of the people in these provinces shall first be bound by it, that the people themselves shall next be bound by it, that neither representatives nor people shall have the power to alter or amend it, and then that if we do insist upon our right to alter it, we shall be thrown back into that state of difficulty which has been held up by some honorable gentlemen as a bug-bear to frighten us into submission, the country being represented as having been bordering on revolution, into which it would assuredly be thrown if this measure were not accepted in its entirety. (Hear, hear.) I think that this proposal will not go down—that it will not meet with that full acceptance which honorable gentlemen imagine. The people have too much intelligence to intrust the arrangement of so important a subject as this, which so intimately affects their future prosperity and happiness, to the hands of any set of men, however able and talented they may be; and if this scheme is carried without giving the people a chance of pronouncing their opinion, honorable gentlemen will be told, when they go back to their constituents, that the people have rights to be respected, that they like to be consulted about the character of the Constitution under which they are to live, and that before it is adopted finally, they like to have a word to say in regard to it, as well as those who assume to speak for them.

HON. MR. MCGEE—They have a word

to say. They say ditto to our action. (Hear, hear.)

MR. M. C. CAMERON—Well, I should like them to have a full opportunity of saying ditto or not as they pleased, and I fancy if they had, the ditto would not be so strong as honorable gentlemen opposite seem to think. (Hear, hear.) I have been told that I have violated my pledges in opposing this scheme, and that my constituents sent me here because they thought me to be in favor of it. Well, I have that yet to learn from them; for I have heard no complaint from them against my action, and have had one letter fully approving of it, and it so happens that it was written by a warm friend of the Honorable President of the Council in the old time. (Hear, hear.) I am not aware that the people anywhere approve of the scheme and say ditto to it, as the Honorable Minister of Agriculture tells us; and when the next election takes place, I presume we will have the ditto in some shape. Now, the Honorable President of the Council may think that I have some personal feeling against himself.

HON. MR. BROWN—Not at all.

MR. M. C. CAMERON—If the honorable gentleman does think that I am actuated by personal motives in my strictures upon him, he is very much mistaken. I have not the slightest personal feeling against him; and as far as I personally am concerned, he may remain in the Ministry and work through with his colleagues just as long as he can, and I promise he will find no factious opposition from me. (Hear, hear.) If I understand myself at all, I desire to promote the interests and advance the prosperity of my country; but I do not believe those interests or that prosperity advanced by the adoption of this scheme. (Hear, hear.) I believe a scheme of union could be devised which would be serviceable to all of these provinces, but I do not believe that Confederation is that scheme. I do not think it is desirable to adopt this, and then trust to the chance of obtaining a change afterwards. Honorable gentlemen from Lower Canada are only postponing the time when they will stand like other men in the community, having voice for voice with the rest, and nothing more. But if we change the Constitution now, is it wise or prudent to make the change only of such a character as to require future amendment, and give rise to future agitation? and is it not better that we should endeavor to make the Constitution