

tives of the people that they are not at liberty to ascertain the wishes of the people respecting it, nor to alter it in any manner, but that they must take it as it is. Still we are told, notwithstanding all this, that this is freedom, and that we are a free people.

HON. MR. CAMPBELL—You are at liberty either to accept or reject it. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. SEYMOUR—Well, that is all very well, but we are told we must accept the scheme as it is; and all the influence that the Government can use—which I fear will be successfully used—(hear, hear)—will be employed to carry it through without the people having an opportunity of saying yea or nay upon it. We are told it is not British to permit this—even to pass a short act allowing the people to vote upon it; but if this is not British, neither is the proposition itself. (Hear, hear.) I entreat honorable members not to pass a measure of this importance without delaying it some little time, at all events, for the purpose of obtaining an expression of public opinion upon it. The people who are to be governed by it, who are for all time to come to live under this Constitution, certainly have a right to be consulted before it is consummated; and for the special well-being of the country, I hope and trust it will not pass without affording them that opportunity. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. BENNETT said—Honorable gentlemen, after the many able and eloquent speeches we have heard on this subject, it may be presumptuous in me to offer any remarks—(cries of "go on.")—but I cannot consent to give a silent vote upon the question before the House, and I think I would be wanting in my duty to those who sent me here if I did not make some observations upon this important subject. (Hear, hear.) I think honorable gentlemen will agree with me that this project is one of the most important—indeed, the most important—that has ever been brought before the Legislature of Canada. (Hear, hear.) We are about to witness a great change in the Constitution of the country, the like of which has not been seen since the union of the provinces; and I am free to say that a change of some kind or other is imperatively demanded, for I think that if the present state of things were allowed to continue it would be difficult, if not impossible, to carry on the Government as it has been carried on for the last three or four years. (Hear, hear.) We have been told by

the honorable and gallant gentleman at the head of the Government that we have been on an inclined plane, and I am sure that if some remedy had not been proposed we would have found ourselves sliding into a state of anarchy from the bitterness of feeling which prevailed in the country. I am not so sanguine, as some honorable gentlemen seem to be, that when we get Confederation we shall have a sort of political millennium, that we shall have no more political storms and agitations, but that we shall then enjoy nothing but the calm and sunshine of political life. But I think we will find ourselves pretty much in the same position as before with regard to parties—that we shall have a Government party and an Opposition, for in all free constitutional governments it is better to have an opposition than to be without one. I object, not to a healthy opposition, but to a factious one. (Hear, hear.) From the difference in the laws, language and institutions of the several provinces it is clear that a legislative union of them is out of the question. The principle of the double majority, as a remedy for our difficulties, has proved to be a failure; representation by population, which would have satisfied Upper Canada, has been persistently denied by Lower Canada; and, therefore, I see no resource but to fall back upon the project of the Confederation of the provinces. (Hear, hear.) I would like to remark upon the peculiar position in which the elected members of this House stand in reference to this subject. It has been said that, if they vote for the resolutions, they vote to make themselves members of the House for life; that this was not contemplated by the constituencies when they were elected; and that it would be destroying the franchise and taking away a right from the people which the House had no authority to do. Well, all I can say is, that I have heard no such objections from the people of the constituency which I have the honor to represent. All I have heard from them is a call for delay in the consideration of this question, and I maintain that delay is not fatal or injurious to it. (Hear, hear.) We have delayed it already for weeks; in New Brunswick it has been postponed till after the general election; and can any one show me that it will injure the measure to put it off for a short time longer? Surely if it is good now, it will be just as good twelve months hence. (Hear, hear.) The resolutions have been drawn up by able, talented, but fallible men; and therefore we ought to weigh them care-