

the scheme should be known as a whole, for how could the people form a sound judgment if we were to lay before them only a vague plan of Confederation, that is to say, the resolutions as they stand at present, unless they were also put in possession of the constitution of the local governments, and all the other details of the measure which most deeply interest them, and with which they are entitled to be made acquainted? Let us wait until the plan is known, and the people will be consulted when the proper time comes. (Hear, hear.)

MR. J. B. E. DORION—Really, Mr. SPEAKER, if the honorable member for Beauharnois meant what he said, he has given us something new. But I do not believe he is really serious when he tells us that we should wait until the constitutions of the local governments are submitted to us, before judging of the merits of the resolutions now before us. However, supposing him to be perfectly in earnest, and that he had no intention of trifling, as he sometimes does, does he fancy for one moment that we are going to accept the reasons he brings forward to induce us to vote against an appeal to the people? If so, he is very much mistaken. (Hear, hear.) I can easily understand that he is embarrassed, and that he should shield himself even under weak arguments in voting against the motion in amendment, for he promised at two electoral meetings to vote for an appeal to the people. (Hear, hear.) He says he will not vote for an appeal to the people, because he is not acquainted with the details of the measure; but why, then, does he vote on the main motion without knowing these details? He knows that the Government have told us that we must vote Confederation before they bring down the constitution of the local governments, and that they intended going to England to secure the new Constitution, without submitting to us the plan of the local constitutions. It will be too late when the delegates return, and after England has given us a new Constitution, to submit the present resolutions to the people. (Hear, hear.) And if we can judge here of this grand scheme of Confederation—as the hon. member says—without having before us the details of the organization of the local governments, why should not the people, in like manner, be afforded an opportunity of recording their opinion of the scheme? The reasons advanced by the honorable member are utterly futile. (Hear, hear.)

MR. GIBBS.—Before the vote is taken

on this motion, I feel it to be my duty to make a few remarks explanatory of the vote I intend to give. When I addressed the House the other evening, I stated that I had given a pledge to my constituents that when the motion came up in this House for submitting the scheme of a union of the Provinces of British North America to the people of this province, I would feel it to be my duty to vote for it. The language I used was something like this, that although I was in favor of the Federation of the British North American Provinces, yet that as the measure was to affect not only those now inhabiting these provinces, but others to follow us, I would insist upon it that the question should be submitted to the people before going into effect, while upon the canvass in my riding, I stated that I looked upon the resolutions submitted in the light of the basis of an agreement that might have been entered into by a number of individuals desirous of going into a partnership, which no one could alter without the consent of the others. I was, therefore, not at all surprised to hear the Honorable Attorney General West, at the opening of the discussion, say that we could not change that treaty, that we must vote on it in this way—either accept or reject it as a whole. It was said that if the people sent me to the House as their representative, I would be found voting for their resolutions as they were, without seeking to amend them in any respect. Although I believed that the resolutions would be presented and pressed as they stood, I did not believe that no amendment would ever be made to them; and although the Parliament of Canada has been told that it cannot alter the scheme, I am not without hope that when the delegation proceeds to England, certain necessary amendments will be introduced by the Government of Great Britain. Now, sir, I consider that to a certain extent the members opposed to the details of the scheme, but who are disposed to favor the general principle, have put their political consciences in the hands of the honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches; therefore I am in hopes that the resolutions will not pass into law exactly in the shape in which they have been presented to this House. Being sent here to represent the people, and feeling the matter to be a very important one, affecting very materially the Constitution under which they live, I consider it my duty to vote for such an amendment as that which has been submitted by the honorable member for Peel. I was strengthened in that view of the case by the words of Lord DURHAM on the subject o