

acquiesced in the scheme as a whole, to some of the particular features of which their own convictions might be opposed, and in reference to which they perhaps had no opportunity of ascertaining definitely the views of their constituents. Now, he would ask honorable gentlemen, did it not constantly happen that in the business of life they were obliged to delegate to a few the conduct of many matters in which they were most deeply interested themselves, but which, from the very nature of the interests involved, could not be dealt with advantageously otherwise, and if they had confidence in the judgment and ability of those to whom the task had been committed, were they not satisfied to accept their recommendations, although their views on all points might not coincide with their own? Just so in the case of the Confederation scheme—it was one which required special ability, tact and judgment, to deal with. It was one in which so many conflicting interests, so many nice questions were involved, that it would have been next to impossible to have arrived at any satisfactory settlement of the question, had the task been committed to a popular assembly or any other large body. Now, he was satisfied that the people of this country were fully persuaded at the time of the Conference that the task of framing a scheme for the union of all the North American Provinces had been assumed by those statesmen who, by their ability, experience and judgment were, of all men, the best qualified for the duty; and he had yet to learn, from any expression of public opinion, either out of doors or in the press, that this confidence had been shaken, or that the scheme, as a whole, had been disapproved of. On the contrary, the people of Canada had now been acquainted with all the important features of the measure for some three months at least, and he believed the result had been that, while various opinions had been expressed in reference to the details of the scheme, the great majority of the people were perfectly satisfied to leave the matter in the hands of their representatives, to be assented to by them as a whole, if, after a full discussion of its merits, they were satisfied that they so far outweighed its defects as to commend itself to their adoption. If then, in the best exercise of his judgment, he had come to the conclusion that the peculiar circumstances of the times, and the merits of the scheme as a whole, outweighed any of the defects which might present themselves in the details, he thought he should be fully warranted, acting on behalf of his constituents, in according his support to the

measure, without being in any way chargeable with a dereliction of duty or a betrayal of the trust committed to him. He would now state to the House what were the considerations which induced him to give his support to the measure, and which, to him at least, appeared of sufficient importance to outweigh all objections that had been brought against it. They were twofold—arising in the first place from our internal condition, and in the second place from our position with regard to the neighboring States. And first, with regard to our internal condition, while he partly agreed with the remark which fell from the honorable member for the Brock Division, that our political differences alone could perhaps scarcely be said to necessitate such great and important constitutional changes as those involved in Confederation; yet taken in connection with our external relations, he thought no one would deny that the state of chronic weakness of the governing body had become a subject of grave apprehension to every well-wisher of their country. No one would deny that when storms were impending, it was doubly necessary that the ships of the state should be guided by firm and determined hands—that weakness and vacillation under such circumstances would be sure to end in disaster. Yet for the last few years, when the political horizon had been growing darker and darker, when fresh causes of irritation had unhappily sprung up from time to time between us and our neighbors, we had seen ministry after ministry break down, until anything like a stable and vigorous government seemed to have become a hopeless impossibility. Who could say that such a state of things was not fraught with danger to any community. He believed that in Federation they had found a remedy for those sectional differences between Upper and Lower Canada, which had so long agitated the country, and had been a source of weakness to so many administrations. Under the scheme now proposed, all causes of jealousy and distrust between the two provinces would be removed, and they might well hail with satisfaction any change which, by removing these stumbling-blocks which sectional feeling and party strife had placed in the way of so many successive ministries, had enabled the ablest men of all parties to unite their councils for the formation of a strong, vigorous and permanent government. For these considerations, amongst others, the measure before the House should have his hearty support, but there were to his mind graver reasons still why the union of the provinces