

action they have taken? Why, sir, not only have the minds of the people of Canada been unbinged by the proceedings of the past year, not only have they been made dissatisfied with the institutions under which they have lived and prospered for a number of years, but political parties have also been demoralized. (Hear, hear.) Yes, the Reform party has become so disorganized by this Confederation scheme, that there is scarcely a vestige of its greatness left—hardly a vestige of that great party that demanded reform for a number of years, but which unfortunately, in 1864 as in 1854, went over to the other side when its leaders could no longer endure to remain in the cold shades of opposition. (Hear, hear.) Is it too much to ask honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches to tell us something of the scheme for federating these two provinces—to give us an inkling of what is to be done, now that the other scheme has failed, and of the liabilities to be assumed by the respective sections of Canada? Are we to be kept in ignorance on these subjects? Are the affairs of the country to continue in the unsettled state in which they now are? Is all legislation to remain at a stand-still until the more and more doubtful prospect of Confederation is realized? (Hear, hear.) What amount of money is required by the Government to meet the danger that is said to have suddenly threatened us? Are the people not to know what preparations are to be made and what sums are to be expended in our defence? I am not opposed to any proper measures being taken to defend the country, but at the same time prudence dictates that we should know what they are to cost before we blindly vote for them. If Confederation is not to take place, what is the use of going on with measures of defence that depended upon Confederation being carried? Why not come down now with a scheme that will apply to Canada alone, and let us know precisely what burdens the people will have to bear for their defence, what additional taxation will be required, and all other information connected with the subject? (Hear, hear.) I do say that it is anything but satisfactory to be told that we are to postpone the promised scheme for our defence at this time, to adjourn over till summer, and in the meantime to send commissioners home to treat with the Imperial Government. If the danger is so imminent as it is said to be, why this long delay? (Hear, hear.) Sir, I never was myself an advocate of any change in our Constitution; I believed it was capable of being well worked to the satisfaction of the

people, if we were free from demagogues and designing persons who sought to create strife between the sections. (Hear, hear.) I am not disposed to extend my remarks further at present. All I can say is, that the Honorable Attorney General West has done the House justice if he has given us all the information in his possession with regard to the present aspect of the Confederation question; and yet it appears to me somewhat absurd to proceed with the debate, when even the Government itself admits the measure to be a failure. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. DORION—I think the announcement made by the Hon. Attorney General West must have taken the House a little by surprise. (Hear, hear.) The policy agreed on by the Government in June, 1864, was certainly not the one carried out at the opening of this session, and still less that which has just been announced. The policy, as we find it in a memorandum then communicated to the House, was that a measure for the Confederation of the two Canadas, with provisions for the admission of the other provinces, should be brought before the House this session. I will give the terms of the memorandum, in order that there may be no doubt about it. When explanations were given in June last, by the present Government, two memoranda were communicated to the House. One was a memorandum that had been communicated to the Hon. the President of the Council, and marked "Confidential." It was in these words:—

The Government are prepared to state, that immediately after the prorogation, they will address themselves, in the most earnest manner, to the negotiation for a Confederation of all the British North American Provinces.

That, failing a successful issue to such negotiations, they are prepared to pledge themselves to legislation during the next session of Parliament for the purpose of remedying the existing difficulties, by introducing the Federal principle for Canada alone, coupled with such provisions as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-Western Territory to be hereafter incorporated into the Canadian system.

That, for the purpose of carrying on the negotiations and settling the details of the promised legislation, a Royal Commission shall be issued, composed of three members of the Government and three members of the Opposition, of whom Mr. BROWN shall be one, and the Government pledge themselves to give all the influence of the Administration to secure to the said Commission the means of advancing the great object in view.

This was the first memorandum that was