

ence to this class of subjects, and the one single debate which was attempted, but could not be made to take place, on the question of the Confederation of the Provinces. With all his ability—and there are few abler men than the hon. gentleman who undertook at that time to bring that question before the House—with all his ability, and the most earnest effort on his part to press it on the attention of the House, he could scarcely obtain a hearing. No one cared for the matter; and it was felt by every one that such was the case. Soon after, a ministerial crisis took place. A new government came in for a few hours, and started a policy. But that policy, again, was not this policy. It did not touch this question. (Hear, hear.) It was proposed, indeed, to deal with that question of representation by population by applying some system of checks or guarantees, doing or trying to do something that might lessen the objection of Lower Canada to a change urged forward as that had been. But that was all. That government fell—fell instantly—and another was formed in its place. And the present Finance Minister, the honorable member for Sherbrooke, who, with all his ability, had not been able to obtain a serious hearing for his proposal of Confederation of the provinces, going into the new government, induced his colleagues to come before the House and the country, with that as a professed portion of their policy. I may be pardoned, perhaps, for a single word here of personal reference, for saying, *en passant*, that when that idea was thus broached (as it was by a Government of which I was as firm a supporter as any man in the House), I did not fail to make it known, that if ever it should be presented to the House as a practical measure by that Government, I should cease to be (so far as it was concerned) one of such supporters. (Hear, hear.) That was not the first time I had thought of it. It had long before been a matter of study with me; and all the anxious reflection I have ever been able to give it, has only had the result of strengthening my convictions against it every day. But how was this idea then brought forward? Tentatively, and just to neutralize the scheme which the BROWN-DORION Administration had hinted to the country. The one fire was to burn out another's burning. (Hear, hear.) The plan of that Government was to make propositions to the Imperial Government and to the gov-

ernments of the Lower Provinces. But how? If you want to gain an object, you put that object before those to whom you propose it in the way most likely to induce them to say yes. This scheme was suggested to the Imperial Government, and to the people and governments of the Lower Provinces, precisely in the way most calculated to induce them to say no. We went and told them, "We are in such a state of embarrassment, we have political questions which so trouble and bother us, that we do not know if we can get along at all, unless you will be so kind as to come into this union with us." (Hear, hear.) It was just as though I were in business, and went round to half a dozen capitalists, telling them, "I have got into debt; my business is gone to the dogs; I have no business capacity; help me by going into partnership with me, or I am ruined." (Hear, hear.) If the object had been not to carry it, it does appear to me that those gentlemen could not have taken a better method of accomplishing that object. And we saw this—that just so soon as it was found that the Lower Provinces did not, as under the circumstances they could not, say yes to a proposal of this kind, and that the Imperial Government let the matter drop, our Administration let it drop too. We never heard another word about it. The despatches were laid on our table in 1859, but nobody asked a question about them. The child was still-born, and no one troubled himself about its want of baptism. We went on with our old questions—representation by population; Upper Canada against Lower Canada; measures, to a great extent; men also, to a great and increasing extent. And we quarrelled and fought about almost everything, but did not waste a thought or word upon this gigantic question of the Confederation of these provinces. (Hear, hear.) In a little while we drifted into another crisis—that of 1862. And from the time of that crisis, and the formation of the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Administration, down to the time when the present Administration was, last summer, brought into its present shape, the one prominent demand made upon political parties and political men everywhere was, to set aside the older questions of measures, and occupy ourselves very much more—not to say exclusively—with the question of men. (Hear, hear.) I am not blaming