

discussion, and underwent long and painstaking revision of all sorts, in all quarters, before it was finally adopted. (Hear, hear.) Yet we are called upon to admit now, and to admit it without examination, that this work of thirty-three gentlemen, done in seventeen days, is a much better work than that; and not only so, but that it is even better for our people and situation, than the time-honored Constitution of our Mother Land; that it combines essentially the advantages of both, with the disadvantages of neither. I do not think so. The Constitution of the United States, it must be borne in mind, at least lasted seventy years without fracture. It has stood a good deal of straining, from events beyond the possible foresight or control of those who framed it; and it may yet stand many more years, notwithstanding this late strain upon it. If, indeed, Louisiana had not been purchased, if the cotton-gin had not been invented—the two unforeseen events which so encouraged the growth of cotton and therefore of slavery—if it had not been for these, what I may call extraneous events, which could not be expected to enter into the minds of the framers of that Constitution, it probably would not have received the shock that it has received; but we do not know yet that that shock will have a fatal effect, or that it will break up the wonderful fabric which they created. Perhaps it may change that fabric more or less in some of its parts; and after it shall have passed away, the fabric itself may not improbably endure for a very long time to come. But as to this proposed Constitution of ours, should it become the organic law of the land, how long will it last? How will it work, if it does last? And to or towards what, while working, will it tend? To these questions, I have now to call the earnest attention of this House. I begin, Mr. SPEAKER, with the future House of Commons—falsely so called. I shall not take up the different resolutions one after another, and criticize them in that manner; but I will take up the different leading features of the scheme consecutively, and endeavor not to misrepresent them. If I should do so, or at all misstate their character or probable effects, I give honorable gentlemen opposite full leave, if only they will do so without throwing jokes across the floor of the House, to correct me, and I will do my best to set myself right. The House of Commons, then, incorrectly so called, to distinguish it

from the other House that corresponds with, but is not named after the House of Lords, the Legislative Council, forms the leading feature of this project; and I take it up first, comparing it with the House of Representatives of the United States, and speaking here not so much of its powers as of its composition. I cannot, in this view, compare it with the Imperial House of Commons, because the principle of its construction is so entirely different. In that respect, it is simply copied from what I think the wrong model; and the copied parts correspond most faithfully and exactly with what I venture to call the least desirable features of the Constitution of the United States House of Representatives. (Hear, hear.) The copy is not, I repeat, of a thing absolutely good, but only of a thing as good as the framers of the Constitution of the United States, circumstanced as they were, could make it; but the peculiarity of their system that I object to, was not at all necessary to ours. I think it was absolutely unnecessary; I think it even very much of an excrescence. It can hardly be denied, Mr. SPEAKER, that there is a good deal of practical objection to the plan of shifting representation districts, which is what this system adopts, and what the system of the United States adopted. Every ten years the representation from each province in the House of Commons is to be changed or readjusted by a rule which, for all practical purposes, is essentially the same as that of the United States. Of course we have not the little addition of the allowance for the three-fifths of the slave population which they have; but decennially we are to take the population of the several provinces, and by a rule in all essentials common to the two systems, we are to declare how many representation districts are to be allowed to each province. Now, the result of that system must be that we can have no lasting constituencies for the future House of Commons. These representation districts cannot be kept to correspond with our municipal, business or registration districts, or with our districts for representation in our provincial legislatures. We are to have a set of special, shifting districts for the mere purpose of electing our Federal House of Commons. I must say that this principle is not, from a British point of view, a sound one. (Hear, hear.) What we ought to do is, to try to establish in this country of ours a set of representation