

prepared to give such explanations as might seem requisite, and as to the mode and time of the discussion he would leave that to the decision of the House.

HON. MR. FERGUSSON BLAIR—[Owing to some noise in the House, the reporter did not clearly understand the opening remarks of the hon. member, except so far as that he desired to convey the impression that what he was about to say was not to be regarded as committing any one but himself; that he did not speak for any party or as representing any party in the House. The hon. member was also understood to allege he did not think the political struggles and difficulties alluded to by the Hon. Premier could be taken as sufficient to justify the great constitutional change now proposed]. He thought that in the course of party struggles for supremacy, the Opposition had erred in seeking to oust the Ministry before they themselves were prepared to assume the charge with a reasonable prospect of being able to carry on the Government with success. This was the British system, and an instance had lately occurred in the Imperial Parliament exemplifying it. On the Danish question Mr. D'ISRAELI could have defeated the Ministry, but, being aware that he could not form a strong Administration, many of his party abstained from voting. Such a condition of things could happen just as well in an assembly of 300 as in one of 600, and he did not think the change proposed would guarantee immunity from future difficulties of the same kind, therefore they might happen in the General Government as well as in that of Canada alone. But looking at the scheme as presented, and forgetting all past party disputes and the charges against the public men concerned, it came before the House in such a shape as to make it necessary to accept or reject it. He must say he could not but attach great weight to a scheme prepared by men of different political opinions, by eminent men who had met together for the express purpose of arranging it, and who had agreed upon its provisions. If it were obstructed by any serious amendments, involving a prolonged delay, such delay might be fatal, and if it were to pass, he thought it should be allowed to do so at a sufficiently early period to permit of its being laid before the Imperial Parliament this year. (Hear, hear.) He could not shut his eyes to the fact that whether or not the union added strength to the provinces interested, it would unquestionably add to their respectability and standing, both at home and abroad. (Hear.) The people of England were evi-

dently looking to the proposed change with confidence and hope, and as likely to perpetuate the connection of the provinces with the empire for a long time to come. But it was well known that there was an anti-colonial party in England persistently urging that it would be an advantage to the nation to get rid of the colonies. The question of defending them was an embarrassing one, and unless some such scheme as this were adopted, it might present grave difficulties. If the scheme were rejected, the effect would be very injurious upon our credit. (Hear.) But if adopted, the reverse would be the case. Its acceptance would also improve our position in the eyes of our neighbors in France and other nations; indeed it would, in all probability, give us a national standing, without the necessity of separating from the mother country. For these reasons he had come to the conscientious conclusion that it would be highly injurious to reject the scheme, and that it was our duty to pass it as soon as was consistent with a due consideration of what was due to so important a subject. He did not think it necessary to express, at greater length, his reasons for giving the motion his support, but he again desired it to be well understood that he spoke only for himself, and not in concert with any one else. At the same time he might say, that from what he knew personally of the feeling of his section of the country, it was highly favorable to the measure. There might be some matters of detail upon which there was a difference of opinion, and when the resolutions came up in their order, he would indicate what they were. The proposed submission of the scheme to the electors would involve a delay which could not be compensated for by any benefit proposed to be derived from such a course; but if there should hereafter be any very important public movement and numerous petitions in favor of an appeal to the people, then the subject would present a different aspect. Or if the majority in favor of the scheme in the other branch of the Legislature should be very small, that might be deemed a sufficient reason for submitting it to the country. As to the course to be pursued in the decision on the merits, he did not know whether it would be best to have it in Committee of the Whole or with the Speaker in the chair.

HON. SIR E. P. TACHÉ thought it would be better that the Speaker should continue in the chair, but with the understanding that every honorable member should be at liberty to speak as freely and frequently as if the House were in committee.