

us together for the first time—institutions which I may not only call new, but describe as on their trial. I feel, then, that the responsibility which falls on me in undertaking this step is all the heavier for this. Should any mistake be made; should any failure of this system arise from any error of judgment of mine, the responsibility which would weigh on me would, certainly, not be slight; and I hope I shall be pardoned if I say the sense of that responsibility on me at this moment is so great, that if I did not feel supported by what I am sure is the present sympathy of the members of the House, based upon a certain sort of good will, and, perhaps, I may say personal confidence in me—[loud cheers]—I should be more than half afraid of undertaking the difficult task that falls to my lot to-night. As it is, I will say this to the House—they may depend upon it, that all I do utter shall be uttered with the firmest conviction on my part that what I say is true, and with the utmost frankness and unreserve which any man in my position can practice towards a deliberative body. [Cheers.]

It may be necessary I should say some words more before I go further, as to the novelty of this position in which we find ourselves, and to which I have already in few words alluded. After an experience of 25 years, of the working of a system, which was called when first introduced a Legislative Union of Upper and Lower Canada into the late Province of Canada—after a 25 years' working of that system, premature, though, perhaps, it was when introduced—certainly inaugurated under many circumstances of unhappy omen, which gave poor promise that it could work well; and with many circumstances in the course of its history, that tended to prevent it from working altogether well,—after, I say, 25 years' operation of that so-called legislative union, which gradually came to work after the fashion of a federative system—by what may be called the consent of everybody so far as the Province of Canada was concerned, a new system of government has been inaugurated, under which we meet here. This system is called a Federative Union, in contradistinction from a Legislative Union. It is of larger geographical extent than the old Union, which, after 25 years of life, has come to an end. It aims at a far larger geographical extension; it aims to embrace within it the great North West Territory, the whole of the vast northern portion of this continent of North America. But this system, Federative in name, is in many essential respects absolutely new. There are points of superficial resemblance in abundance to the great Federative system that has been for a long time in operation to the south of us; but there are also points of radical contrast between the two systems presenting themselves everywhere. Ours is a system by no means closely like that which generally prevails for the great Empire of which we form part; but it has, I venture to think, more points of resemblance to that, than it has to the apparently more similar constitution of the Great Republic to the south of us. Now, beginning institutions of this kind, under this system absolutely new, aiming at so great results, and surrounded by so many circumstances which must prevent the cautious man from feeling perfectly sure to what those results may lead, it is of the last importance to us that we take our first steps under this great new system advisedly, in the right temper and in the right state of mind. [Cheers.] I think it essential, absolutely essential, that every man who calls himself a public man in Canada, let alone the man who claims to be a statesman, should not merely say, but show by his words and acts, that he gives to