

into Committee of Supply, but as the present was an equally favorable opportunity, he trusted there would be no objection to his putting them now.

ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—No, go on.

HON. MR. HOLTON said the first question had a reference to the subject to which the Attorney General had alluded in the course of his remarks just now. It was, whether it was the intention of the Government to bring down their projects for local constitutions for the two sections of Canada before inviting the House to proceed with the discussion of this question of Confederation. The honorable gentleman had already answered that question by saying it was not the intention of the Government to introduce this measure, and had given reasons for this course. Upon these reasons he (Hon. Mr. HOLTON) desired to say one word. He maintained that the question now before the House was, should they revolutionize the country, should they revolutionize the government of the country? (Hear, hear.) That was undoubtedly the question, and he would like to know distinctly whether the form of the proposed new government, local as well as general, formed part of the same scheme? He felt that the House could not be in a position to consider the proposed forms of the Constitution until they had before them, at least in a general way, the forms of government which were to obtain between the two sections of the province, of the union of which a dissolution was to be wrought by the measure before the House. Then another question which he had proposed to put had reference to the educational system of Lower Canada. The Minister of Finance, in a speech at Sherbrooke, had promised that the Government would introduce a bill to amend the school laws of Lower Canada. The honorable gentleman must be aware that this was a question on which there was a great deal of feeling in this section of the province amongst the English-speaking, or the Protestant class, of the population. He did not like to introduce anything of a religious character into discussions of this House, but in debating the great changes which it was proposed to effect in our system of government, the effect of them upon that class to which he referred must be considered. Among that class there was no phase or feature of these threatened changes which excited so much alarm as this very question of education. Well, the Minister of Finance had said, with great solemnity, as having the authority of his colleagues for it, that this session the Government would bring down

amendments to the school laws of Lower Canada, which they proposed enacting into law before a change of government should take place, and which would become a permanent settlement of that question. The question he then desired to put was whether they intended to submit these amendments before they asked the House to pass finally upon the other scheme of Confederation, and if so, to state when the House might look for that measure, as it would undoubtedly exercise very considerable influence upon the discussion of the Confederation scheme, and probably in the last resort from several members from Lower Canada. (Hear, hear.) Then the third question of which he had given notice had reference to the Intercolonial Railway. It was a novelty that, perhaps, might not be found in the constitution of any country, to introduce a provision for the construction of a railroad, canals, turnpike roads or other public works. (Laughter.) But the novelty existed in this case, and we are told that a part of the proposed Constitution was to build the Intercolonial Railway, as to the usefulness of which there had been a great difference of opinion amongst members of the House and in the country.

After the dinner recess.

HON. MR. HOLTON, continuing his remarks, said it appeared now to be proposed to make the construction of a railway part of the Constitution of the country. The President of the Council, who had formerly strongly opposed the Intercolonial Railway, had now become so enamoured of it and its adjuncts that he was reported to have declared in a speech at Toronto, that rather than not have those adjuncts, to wit, the union of all the provinces, which he had also previously opposed as vigorously as the railway itself, he would consent to building six intercolonial railways. (Laughter.) He thought the House was entitled to know what was to be done with reference to that railway before they were asked to consider the great question of which it formed a part. He desired, also, some information as to the position of the North-West question on which the President of the Council had always taken strong grounds, maintaining that Canada had a territorial right extending over all that region. He took it for granted the President of the Council still maintained his position, but he wished to know from him authoritatively the manner in which the Government proposed to deal with the question. He desired, also, some information on the subject of the defences, and what was to be the measure of our con-