

any damage done is to the honorable member's own friends. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I will now come more closely to the subject under debate, the proposed Confederation of Canada and the other British North American colonies, and in doing so I feel I am dealing with a matter in which is bound up the happiness and prosperity of the country, not for the present only, but for a long course of years to come. I only wish the honorable member for the Niagara Division had read the debates which preceded the establishment of the American Constitution after the United States had gained their independence. I especially advert to the debates in the Councils of Virginia, which at that time, by reason of its wealth and population, bore a similar relation to the other colonies to that which Canada now bears to the Lower Provinces. If he had read the speeches of the MADISONS, the MARSHALLS, the RANDOLPHS, the HENRYS, the LEES and others, he would have found no passage in keeping with the sentiments he uttered yesterday. Those great patriots evidently met under a deep sense of the responsibilities of their work, and instead of bringing into the debates the small village feelings and animosities tending to embarrass and to destroy harmony, they acted like great men, true and noble men as they were, and applied themselves to their task with the purpose of bringing it to a successful issue. The confederation which they first established, in the year 1781, did not work well. It remained poor, without respect abroad, or prosperity at home, and so in 1789 they abandoned that condition of existence and adopted the Constitution which lasted until the commencement of the present unfortunate war, and now governs the North. In speaking of the Constitution prepared by our delegates, the honorable member for Niagara said it was neither one thing nor another, it was neither legislative nor federative, but a mongrel nondescript scheme between the two, a Constitution for which there was no precedent in all the world's history. Such, at least, was the effect of the words he used. It happens, however, to be a fact, that in opposition to the profound and enlightened opinion of the honorable member, the work of the delegates has received the approbation of some of the most eminent statesmen of England, as well as that of the most distinguished and able writers for the press of that country, which is at any rate some small consolation. I will say that if the delegates who met at Quebec and prepared that instrument were incompetent for the task, I do not know where others can be found to

do it better; and, after all, I think that, notwithstanding the remarks of the honorable member, the disinterested testimonies to the value of the work done, coming from the quarters I have indicated, will be considered in Canada as having some weight. (Hear, hear.) But since the honorable member regards this as a mongrel constitution, unworthy of acceptance, ought he not to have been ready to suggest something better? Should he not as a patriot have given the country the benefit of his superior wisdom? It is of no use to look for a better form to the constitution of the ancient republics which have passed away, their having ceased to exist being of itself proof enough of their not being adapted to our wants. The honorable member might perhaps have cited the Swiss and Dutch republics, or the constitutions of the United States of 1781 and 1789, and if he had, the House would perhaps have been able to compare them with that now proposed, and arrive at some definite conclusion which might after all have been that ours, as now proposed, is that which promises best to secure freedom to those who are to live under it, and stability for the political condition of our country. With respect to the Swiss Confederation, however well it may be considered to have worked, it is a fact that within our own time a civil war has existed among the cantons, and that republic has been upon the brink of destruction. As regards the Dutch republic, it is a matter of history how it fell. During the whole of its struggle against PHILIP II., the provinces comprising it never had that centralized power which is necessary to the stability of a government, especially one assailed by enemies from without, for two provinces, Guelderland and Overijssel, contributed nothing all that contest through—each standing upon its state rights—while among the remaining five, by far the largest proportion was contributed by the one Province of Holland. The natural result was that the republic fell, and became a monarchy. The same evil lay at the root of the American Constitution of 1781, and after it had been adopted, so ill concerted and disunited were the efforts of the thirteen states, that the arrangement would not work at all, so that General WASHINGTON was obliged to ask for and actually obtained dictatorial powers, to enable him to carry on the contest against Great Britain. The difficulties between the North and the South which now prevail, arose wholly upon the question of state rights, and had provisions existed in the Constitution of the American