

said: "To attempt to unite people who differ in language, in laws and in manners, is very absurd. To do so is to sow the seeds of discord, a thing most undoubtedly fatal to the establishment of a new government. Let their Constitution be adapted to their nature, the only solid basis of every government." The no less celebrated leader of the Whig party, Fox, opposed to the division of the provinces, spoke to obtain an elective Legislative Council for Canada. "With such a colony as this," observed that orator, "which is susceptible of progress, it is important that no ground should be given her to envy her neighbors. Canada ought to remain attached to Great Britain by the choice of her inhabitants; it cannot be preserved in any other way. But that this may be so, the inhabitants must feel that their situation is not worse than that of the Americans."

This Constitution of 1791 was a great concession to Lower Canada. At last it had an elective chamber, in which the people might express their views, and through which they could convey their wishes to the foot of the Throne. And also at once was seen a generation of eminent men, of whom history will honorably preserve the sainted names, representing the interests which were entrusted to them with wonderful skill and most uncommon success :—

The elections were fixed for the month of July, and the meeting of the Houses for the month of December. Of the fifty members elected sixteen were English, notwithstanding the constant opposition which these latter had displayed to French-Canadian interests.

Thus on the organizing of the first elective chamber, and in spite of all the opposition which the French-Canadian party had met with from the English party, we find sixteen English members elected in great part by the votes of individuals of our nationality. In this House, some days since, we heard Upper Canadian members, praising our liberality, and acknowledging that never had national or religious fanaticism been displayed by us. That is true; we are essentially liberal and tolerant, and a sufficient proof of it, is given in the most striking manner, by the number of members of this House who, although of religion and origin differing from ours, yet represent counties in great part or exclusively French and Catholic. This is a subject of pride for us. Unfortunately we have no return in kind made to us, and we do not meet with the like liberality from the English population. Whenever it is in a majority, it closes to us the door of honors and of office; it excludes us everywhere, where it is powerful enough to do so. From

the very first Parliament of Lower Canada, the English, although in an insignificant minority, endeavored to proscrib the use of the French language, and from that day began between the two races the same contests of which we are to-day witnesses. We are told that times have changed; it is true, but if the attempts at oppression are less barefaced, if they are concealed under an exterior better calculated to deceive us, it is only because we are more numerous now than we were then, and that greater dread than ever is entertained of the vicinity of the American Union, in which, now more than ever, it would be easy for our population to find a powerful remedy for the evils of which it might have to complain. But let us see, Mr. SPEAKER, what occurred at the opening of our first House of Assembly. I quote an author who has always supported the party of the Honorable Attorney General East :—

Parliament opened on the 17th December, in the Episcopal Palace, which had been occupied by the Government since the conquest. A Speaker had to be chosen, and Mr. J. PANET was proposed. Then it was that the English members were found to renew their attempts to obtain the supremacy and to slight the interests of those by whom they had been elected. Without the least delicacy and in spite of their being in a minority, they proposed in opposition to Mr. PANET, Messrs. GRANT, MCGILL and JORDAN. Mr. PANET's election was carried by a majority of 28 to 18, two Canadians having voted against him. The hatred which the English party bore to the name of Canadian manifested itself again when a proposition was made that the minutes of the proceedings of the House should be prepared in both languages. A lively and animated debate arose between the two opposite parties, and this very reasonable demand was treated as a species of rebellion against the Mother Country. The French members were accused of insubordination; the motives which induced the act seemed to be misunderstood, and attempts were even made to intimidate them; but it was in vain. The unassailable arguments upon which the Canadians rested their claim, and their words, like their eloquence, bearing the stamp of dignity, finally triumphed over the attacks of their fanatical opponents.

Thus the French element demanded the preparation of the proceedings of the House in its own language, but we find that the English element opposed it with all the power at its command. This was regarded as rebellion against the Mother Country! It can hardly be believed. Here was a legislative body almost entirely French in its com-