

nationality would be swallowed up by Confederation, and that in twenty-five or thirty years' time there would not be a single French-Canadian left in Lower Canada. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, I appeal, to prove the falsehood of these declarations, to the men who in 1840—the time of the union of the two provinces—labored with so much zeal and energy to guard the natural depository of our social and religious rights from danger—I appeal, to prove it, to those men who applied all their energy, their abilities, and their patriotism to prevent the union; to those men who, endowed with a singleness of mind at least equal to that which animates the opponents of Confederation, procured numerous petitions to be signed against the union of Upper and Lower Canada; to those men, in short, who predicted that in ten years' time there would not be a single French-Canadian left—these men I summon to the bar of public opinion, and I ask them—"Gentlemen, did you predict truly? What has become of that French-Canadian nationality which was to be swallowed up by the union? Has it disappeared, as you said it would? See and judge for yourselves." That nation, which was doomed to be annihilated, has built up Montreal, the first commercial city in the two Canadas—Montreal, on which the honorable member for Richelieu (Mr. PERRAULT) pronounced such a pompous eulogy in his speech the other evening—an eulogy that he extended to the country generally—praising its immense resources and growing prosperity. It was under the union and through the union that the splendid Victoria Bridge was erected, the most magnificent work of the kind in the world. Under its auspices, also, we constructed those immense canals which have received honorable mention from the lips of the honorable member for Richelieu; and everybody knows that that honorable member is eminently qualified to pronounce a judgment on such matters, having seen and examined the canals constructed in Europe. Accordingly we are justified in saying that our canals are immeasurably superior to the canals of Europe, as he tells us in respect to several of our canals, that a boy in the smallest of skiffs could touch the *revêtement* walls with his two tiny oars. I must say that I do not accept the interpretation put on that part of the honorable member's speech by the honorable member for Montcalm (Mr. JOSEPH DUFRESNE), in which he said that there were men on the bench of bishops as well informed and as eminent as any that were to be found

in any ministry. This is the interpretation I put on that phrase of the honorable member for Richelieu, and I do not think I mistake in saying that it turns against those who, at the time of the union of the two Canadas, did everything they could to prevent it. In 1840 those men, those good and zealous patriots, told the people, by way of serving their cause, that in twenty-five years there would not be a single French-Canadian left in Lower Canada; and now the honorable member for Richelieu comes out and gives them the lie direct by saying that, at this present time, the Roman Catholic bench of bishops numbers among its members men—of course French-Canadians—who are as eminent for their talents and acquirements as the most distinguished members of our political world; and that religion is amply protected by the present Constitution, which was nevertheless destined, according to those great patriots, to swallow us up and sweep us from the face of the continent.

MR. DENIS—That is very true.

MR. DE NIVERVILLE—One word to comfort those French-Canadians who are afraid of suffering wrong in the Federal Parliament, being as they say an insignificant minority of that body. Ever since nations began to comprehend their true interests, a certain equilibrium has been established which it will always be their aim to maintain. This constitutes the protection which the union of two weak parties affords against a strong one, which would aggrandize itself at their expense. This law of equilibrium is reproduced in all times and places—among nations and among individuals: it is found even among animals. For what purpose did the two first nations in the world, France and England, unite together to resist the invading forces of the powerful despot of the north—the Emperor of Russia, and what was the object of the campaign in the Crimea? Was it to reap the barren glory of shouting that the French soldiers rushed to the assault with the impetuous speed of the thunderbolt; that the English soldiers received the enemy's fire without yielding a foot; that they marched with the cool determination of a wedge of iron against the enemy's squares, and that nothing could resist their onward movement? By no means. Those two powers were perfectly acquainted with the qualities which distinguished their respective armies, and did not need to put them to the proof. Their intention was simply to prevent the