

ruinously expensive war footing? And what could we do against an invading army of two or three hundred thousand men, with our treasury exhausted by the fortifications, and with hardly any assistance from England, whose policy at this moment is anti-colonial? I cannot understand how, in face of the danger which is impending over us, and for which we are so little prepared, the Government can thus cast defiance in the teeth of the powerful nation who are adjacent to us, and whose armies now in the field could set at naught any resistance to immediate invasion. I assert it positively, Mr. SPEAKER, the United States have not the least intention of attacking us, so long as we remain peaceable spectators of their fratricidal struggle, and so long as we continue to confine ourselves to peaceful occupations. But if, on the contrary, we create here a hostile military power, if we establish here the throne of a viceroy or of a foreign monarch, in defiance of the principles which form the groundwork upon which rests the political system of the United States, we may then rest assured that the neighbouring republic will sweep away that monarchical organization, established in rivalry to its own democratic system. (Hear, hear.) Such, Mr. SPEAKER, is the question in its most serious aspect. I shall not enlarge upon the details of the scheme of Confederation, which have been so ably criticised by the hon. members who have preceded me; and besides I shall have an opportunity of discussing them when the amendments to the scheme are submitted to the House. But I may now say that those details cannot be accepted by the people. We have already received numerous petitions praying for the rejection of the measure, and those petitions continue to reach us every day. Now, I ask you, Mr. SPEAKER, what the sentiments of the people will be if that scheme is adopted, and if in the course of two months it is returned to us from England, after having received the sanction of the Imperial Parliament, without its having been possible for us to alter the most trifling of its details? Is it supposed, after a Constitution shall have been forced on the French-Canadians, which they have opposed to the utmost, that they will be very enthusiastic in the defence of that Constitution which shall have deprived them of a part of the political rights which they enjoyed? And, it cannot be denied, by adopting the proposed Confederation, we yield up some of the privileges which we now enjoy;

have not our Ministers themselves told us that under the pressure of the demands of Upper Canada it was necessary to make concessions at the Quebec Conference, in order to ensure the adoption of the present scheme? The hostile majority of Upper Canada have obtained representation based on population, against which Lower Canada has so energetically struggled for fifteen years, because she saw in that concession the annihilation of our influence as a race. Under these circumstances, Mr. SPEAKER, is it supposed that reliance is to be placed on the assistance of the French-Canadians, who were formerly so terrible in the attack, and who fought, without hesitation, one against ten, a proportion in which we shall again find ourselves opposed to the Americans in the probable event of a war? To hope that they will fight with the same impulse now, when they are being deprived of the surest guarantees of their natural existence and of their most sacred political rights, is greatly to deceive ourselves, and to betray ignorance of what has always been the cause of their heroism in the conflict. Under the Constitution as it is, they would again fight with similar courage, regardless of numbers, because they love that Constitution which secures to them all that they hold most dear, and because they wish to preserve it. Under Confederation, on the contrary, we have nothing left to defend; our influence as a race is gone, and sooner than be absorbed in a Confederation, the existence of which will prove a source of constant strife without bringing with it compensating advantages, the people dissatisfied will seek other and more advantageous political and commercial alliances, and for this reason it is that I consider that the scheme of Confederation will lead us directly to annexation to the United States. When the commissioners from the North and the South recently had an interview in order to decide the possible conditions of an honorable peace, one of the three propositions submitted by the North was to the effect that the two armies should not be disbanded after the cessation of hostilities, but should be united for the purpose of carrying on a foreign war. Now, Mr. SPEAKER, what does the expression, "foreign war," when used by the United States, mean, except war upon Canada? And what could the fifty battalions which England could send us do against the combined armies of the North and the South, the strength of which amounts to a million of