

he written in comparison with what has been written by certain newspapers of the Catholic opposition, among which the *Avenir* takes the highest place? They have ransacked the history of the world from the beginning of the Christian era in search of the calumnies of past ages, with the view of overwhelming, if it were possible, our bishops and priests. They have even gone so far as to cast their venom upon the august Pontiff who now rules over the Catholic Church; and what has not been done by the *Institut Canadien* of Montreal, which is patronized by the leaders of the Opposition? (Cheers.)

HON. MR. CARTIER—And the *Avenir*, which asserted that the Pope ought to be a schoolmaster.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—Ah! we now well know those who pretend to be the defenders of Catholicism, those former editors of the *Avenir*; we know what has been done by the *Avenir*, and the *Pays* also, in certain circumstances. (Hear, hear.) But here is what we find in a great constitutional authority, the value of which honorable gentlemen opposite will probably not contest—"HALLAM'S *History of England*":—

Upon the prevalent disaffection and the general changes of the established government was founded that measure so frequently arraigned in later times, the substitution of septennial for triennial parliaments. The Ministry deemed it too perilous to their master, certainly for themselves, to encounter a general election in 1717; but the arguments adduced for the alteration, as if it was meant to be permanent, were drawn from its permanent expediency. Nothing can be more extravagant than what is sometimes confidently pretended by the ignorant, that the legislature exceeded its rights by this enactment; or if that cannot legally be advanced, that it at least violated the trust of the people, and broke in upon the ancient Constitution. The law for triennial parliaments was of little more than twenty years' continuance. It was an experiment which, as was argued, had proved unsuccessful; it was subject, like every other law, to be repealed entirely, or to be modified at discretion. As a question of constitutional expediency, the septennial bill was doubtless open at the time to one serious objection. Everyone admitted that a parliament subsisting indefinitely during a king's life, but exposed at all times to be dissolved at his pleasure, would become far too little dependent on the people, and far too much so on the Crown. But if the period of its continuance should thus be extended from three to seven years, the natural course of encroachment of those in power, or some momentous circumstance like the present, might lead to fresh prolongations, and gradually to an entire repeal of what had been thought so important a safeguard of its

purity. Time has happily put an end to apprehensions, which are not on that account to be reckoned unreasonable.

Against those who pretended that the Parliament of England could not effect, without an appeal to the people, a legislative union with Ireland, WILLIAM PITT, that other great constitutional authority, maintained that Parliament had the right to alter even the succession to the Throne, to incorporate with itself another legislature, to deprive of the franchise those who elected it, and to create for itself other electors. To be more exact I will quote from a speech made by the illustrious Sir ROBERT PEEL, on the 27th March, 1846, on the Corn Law question. You will find there the opinion of PITT, FOX and PEEL himself, the most weighty English constitutional authority of this century. It is found in HANSARDS *Parliamentary Debates*, third series, vol. 85, pages 224, 225 and 226. Sir ROBERT PEEL said:—

But my honorable friend says he did not object to it as impeding the formation of a protection government, but as preventing a dissolution; and my honorable friend and others have blamed me for not advising a dissolution of Parliament. In my opinion, it would have been utterly inconsistent with the duty of a Minister to advise a dissolution of Parliament under the particular circumstances in which this question of the Corn Law was placed. Why should it be so utterly impossible for this Parliament to deal with the present proposition? After its election in 1841, this Parliament passed the existing Corn Law, which diminished protection; this Parliament passed the tariff destroying altogether the system of prohibition with respect to food; this Parliament passed the Canada Corn Bill; why should it exceed the functions of this Parliament to entertain the present proposition? But upon much higher ground I would not consent to a dissolution. That, indeed, I think would have been a "dangerous precedent" for a Minister to admit that the existing Legislature was incompetent to the entertainment of any question; that is a precedent which I would not establish. Whatever may have been the circumstances that may have taken place at an election, I never would sanction the view that any House of Commons is incompetent to entertain a measure that is necessary for the well-being of the community. If you were to admit that doctrine, you would shake the foundations on which many of the best laws are placed. Why, that doctrine was propounded at the time of the union between England and Ireland, as it had been previously at the time of the union between England and Scotland. It was maintained in Ireland very vehemently, but it was not maintained in this country by Mr. Fox. It was slightly adverted to by Mr. SHERIDAN at the time when the message with regard to the union