

these resolutions as they are, we shall vote without knowing exactly the nature of the guarantees they afford us. (Cheers.)

MR. RÉMILLARD said—MR. SPEAKER, the question of a Federal union of the British North American Provinces is one of such importance, that at the present time it is engaging the attention, not only of this honorable House, but also of the whole political world. I consider, therefore, that it is the duty of those to whom it is submitted to express, each in his own way, the reasons which induce them to adopt or reject the union in question. When for the first time, in the year 1861, the county of Bellechasse did me the honor to send me here as its representative, I had not the slightest idea that I should be called upon, in the beginning of 1865, to take part in the discussion of such a measure, upon which, in my opinion, our whole future depends. So rapid, however, is the growth of events in this age of progress of every kind, that there is no reason to be surprised that we are to-day called upon to grapple with the subject of the political position of our youthful country. I am prepared at once to acknowledge, MR. SPEAKER, that that position has not for several years past appeared to me to be an enviable one; and in fact what has the political aspect been? Within the precincts of this House we have looked upon scenes that are to be regretted and that were of frequent occurrence. We have looked upon bitter and incessant strife between our public men on the subject of certain sectional difficulties, which should be settled in a friendly way, if it is our wish at a later period to avoid serious troubles. We have seen Ministries succeed each other at intervals of hardly six months—Ministries which were daily accused, and in many cases with good reason, of having been guilty of acts of corruption in order to prolong their feeble existence. Without these precincts we have seen public journals filled with personal attacks and insults of every kind, general elections every year, carried in many counties by means of fraud, and the fomenting of wretched prejudices. (Hear, hear.) To such a degree had this been carried, that the people had come to consider it a highly meritorious action to calumniate a member or a candidate, and to deprive him of that good character which he had, in some cases, acquired by many and great sacrifices. (Hear, hear.) Honest men can experience

no feeling other than disgust at such a political course, which is inimical to every feeling of patriotism, and is fraught with danger to our institutions. The Canadian people, by nature brave, intelligent and courageous, are called upon to play a more noble and a more worthy part than that. Upon our statesmen, let them belong to what party they may, it devolves to provide them with a career which is suitable to them, without taking into consideration either prejudices or opinions expressed at another period and under other circumstances. (Hear, hear.) We French-Canadians especially, if we are desirous of continuing to enjoy, in the midst of the various races who inhabit this vast continent of America, the institutions which have been so carefully preserved for us, and which are more precious to us than life itself, require to seek an alliance with the inhabitants of the other British American Provinces, with which we have interests in common, which will have, in case of invasion, the same enemies as ourselves to repulse, and which, like ourselves, enjoy the advantage of living under the protection of Great Britain. At a time when we are, so to speak, threatened by the United States, ought we to be so foolish as to disregard the advice which comes to us from Great Britain, without whom we could do nothing for our defence, and to pretend seriously that we can without danger overthrow the Federal union which we are discussing, in the preparation of which our statesmen themselves prescribed the conditions which they considered to be most equitable and the best calculated to preserve the interests which are most dear to all? Should we act in this way, we should be forming a very incorrect estimate of our position in relation to England, and our formidable neighbours the United States. The distinguished men who took part in the Conference held at Quebec in the month of October last, unanimously declared that "the best interests and present and future prosperity of British North America will be promoted by a Federal union under the Crown of Great Britain, provided such union can be effected on principles just to the several provinces." The most eminent men in England have repeated the same thing, and have approved of the scheme of the Conference. I do not propose, MR. SPEAKER, to discuss the several articles contained in the plan of union; the honorable members who have preceded me