

if they are true to themselves, to fear the fate of Louisiana, which had not as many inhabitants, when it was sold by NAPOLEON to the United States, as Canada had in 1761. A people numbering a million does not vanish easily, especially when they are the owners of the soil. Their number is rapidly increasing. New townships are being opened in every direction, and being peopled with industrious settlers. In the Eastern Townships, which it was thought were destined to be peopled entirely by English settlers, these latter are slowly giving way to the French-Canadians. There is a friendly rivalry between the two races, a struggle of labor and energy; contact with our fellow-countrymen of English origin has at last opened our eyes; we have at last comprehended that in order to succeed, not only labor is needed, but well-directed and skilled labor, and we profit by their example and by the experience they have acquired in the old countries of Europe. Agriculture with us is now becoming an honorable pursuit; the man of education is no longer ashamed to devote himself to it. Our farmers feel the necessity and desire of attaining perfection in the art. We possess magnificent model farms, in which we can learn the science of agriculture. We are entering a new era of prosperity. The French-Canadians hold a distinguished position in the commerce of the country; they have founded banks and savings banks; on the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal, they own one of the finest lines of steamboats in America; there is not a parish on the great river which has not its steamboat; the communications with the great towns are easy; we have railways, and we now measure by hours the duration of a journey which formerly we measured by days; we have foundries and manufactories, and our shipbuilders have obtained a European renown. We have a literature peculiarly our own; we have authors, of whom we are justly proud; to them we entrust our language and our history; they are the pillars of our nationality. Nothing denotes our existence as a people so much as our literature; education has penetrated everywhere; we have several excellent colleges, and an university in which all the sciences may be studied under excellent professors. Our young men learn in the military schools how to defend their country. We possess all the elements of a nationality. But a few months ago, we were steadily advancing towards prosperity, satisfied with the present and confident in the future of the French-Canadian people. Suddenly discouragement, which had never over-

come us in our adversity, takes possession of us; our aspirations are now only empty dreams; the labors of a century must be wasted; we must give up our nationality, adopt a new one, greater and nobler, we are told, than our own, but then it will no longer be our own. And why? Because it is our inevitable fate, against which it is of no use to struggle. But have we not already struggled against destiny when we were more feeble than we are now, and have we not triumphed? Let us not give to the world the sad spectacle of a people voluntarily resigning its nationality. Nor do we intend to do so. Let the people have time given them to understand the question; let their opinion on the subject be obtained at the polls. It is but their right, unless our form of government is a delusion and a snare. If the measure is a good one, what danger is there in discussing it? If the new Constitution it is proposed to give us is to last for centuries, why should we not at least endeavor to make it as perfect as possible? Why press its adoption before it is understood? In conclusion, I object to the proposed Confederation, first, as a Canadian, without reference to origin, and secondly, as a French-Canadian. From either point of view, I look upon the measure as a fatal error; and, as a French-Canadian, I once more appeal to my fellow-countrymen, reminding them of the precious inheritance confided to their keeping—an inheritance sanctified by the blood of their fathers, and which it is their duty to hand down to their children as unimpaired as they received it. (Cheers.)

The debate was then adjourned.

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TUESDAY, February 21, 1865.

HON. SOLICITOR GENERAL LANGEVIN
—It is not without some degree of hesitation that I rise to address the House on this occasion; for I see before me the representatives of two millions and a half of people, who are called together to settle the most weighty matters which concern them, and more particularly to take into consideration a question involving the destiny, not only of the two Canadas, but also of all the Provinces of British North America. I must confess that I experience a strong feeling of hesitation and great diffidence of my own powers, when I consider the importance of the measure submitted to us for discussion, and the consequences which may result from