

changes undergone by our own Legislative Council, so that I need not recur to that subject. The Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands has asserted that we are justified in voting on the proposed reversal of the Constitution without an appeal to the people. I beg to differ from that opinion. I know the nature of a trust, whether civil or political; they both entail very much the same duties. Well, what is the charge entrusted to us by our constituents? That of working out the present Constitution to the best of our understanding and of our judgment. Such is the power entrusted to us; but never have our electors authorized us, as it is now proposed to do, to destroy the Constitution itself and to enter into a political alliance with the other British provinces of this continent. An instance of a similar constitutional subversion, without the authorization of the people, is not to be found in the pages of history. It has been stated in this House that the project of Confederation was known to a portion of the people, and that there was nothing to prevent its adoption being pressed. Here again, I beg to differ with the hon. members who express that opinion. I think that even though the project were, as stated, known by a portion of the people, that would not be a reason for precipitating its adoption, for the plan interests the whole country generally, and it is not sufficient that it should be acceptable to a certain portion of the inhabitants, but to the great mass of the people. Moreover, if the public meetings already held in Lower Canada serve to indicate the popular opinion relative to this question, in this section of the country at all events, it may fearlessly be said that the project has been condemned in fifteen counties. Will any one venture to pretend that Lower Canada is to be of no account in the Confederation, and that Upper Canada alone has a right to make its voice heard; that only its approval or disapproval of the scheme can entail the adoption or rejection of that scheme? Most assuredly, I do not believe that any one would ever venture to enunciate such a pretension. I know of but one single county in Lower Canada which authorized its representative to vote on the scheme in question as he should think fit. I therefore consider that I am justified in saying, that the reason which induces the Government to cause this measure to be adopted without submitting all its details, is that it fears to

have those details known by the people, who no doubt would have no course left save to reject them. After having displayed Confederation clothed in the most brilliant colors, the Administration fears to allow the people to examine it in its true light, and as it is intended to thrust it upon them. I have already stated that throughout the whole of Lower Canada, but one county has been found which granted to its representative the privilege of voting on this question according to his own judgment. In all the remaining counties in which the people have been called together to pronounce upon it, the scheme of Confederation has been formally condemned.

HON. MR. GUEVREMONT—Several counties pronounced themselves in favor of the scheme; among others, the county of Vaudreuil.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—I am not aware that the county of Vaudreuil voted in favor of Confederation. The honorable member for Richelieu had also mentioned the county of Richelieu as one of those which had not rejected the scheme of Confederation.

HON. MR. GUEVREMONT—The meeting in question did not condemn Confederation. It merely declared itself in favor of certain resolutions which were submitted to it, which demanded that the people should be consulted as to the proposed constitutional changes.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—It is perfectly true that the county of Richelieu never condemned the details of the measure, and for a very simple reason: the Government had never allowed them to be known, and still persists at this present time in keeping the country in ignorance of them. But the honorable gentleman admits that the county of Richelieu directed its representative to demand an appeal to the people. To say that Lower Canada is favorable to the scheme of Confederation, is to make an assertion to which the public meetings which have been held within the last month or two give the lie in the most formal manner. I know what to think of the expression of public opinion in the district of Montreal; as to the district of Quebec, perhaps the honorable gentlemen who represent the several divisions comprised in it will be good enough to tell me whether or not there have been any meetings in favor of Confederation? Until I am shown that the project has been approved there, I shall venture to believe that in the district of Quebec, as in the district of Montreal, public opinion has not approved