

to-day he told us, after drawing himself up with that righteous indignation which he can so well affect, that the Honorable Attorney General West had tried to stop the publication of the debates, and that he himself had yet to fire his speech on this great subject, because it was too late to do so on Saturday morning; and yet, when the honorable gentleman gets up, he says he will confine himself to this resolution. He did so, and confined himself very narrowly to it. (Hear, hear.) The hon. gentleman has somehow or other become the guardian of my political reputation. He has, on two or three occasions, warned me that although the course I took was, perhaps, that of a practical man—that of one who desired merely to keep office and become famous for political acuteness—yet it would never secure for me the fame of being a great statesman. Well, sir, I am satisfied to confine myself to practical things—to the securing of such practical measures as the country really wants. I am satisfied not to have a reputation for indulging in imaginary schemes and harboring visionary ideas that may end sometimes in an annexation movement, sometimes in Federation and sometimes in a legislative union, but always utopian and never practical. I am satisfied to leave the imaginary, the poetic and the impossible to the hon. member for Chateauguay. The other day the honorable gentleman paused to say, in the course of one of his little, numerous, by the by speeches, that in taking the course I have done on this question—that of advocating a Federal instead of a Legislative union—I violated all the principles of my former life having a bearing on this subject. Mr. SPEAKER, it is quite true that after a careful examination of the Constitution of the United States, in connection with its practical working, and the civil war that has grown out of it, I saw many weaknesses in connection with the Federal system, as operated in that country, and I was as desirous as any man could be in taking part in the Conference relating to union between the Provinces of British North America, that as much as the legislative form of government as possible, and as few of the weaknesses which experience had shown to exist in the American Constitution, should be incorporated in ours. I do not like to refer to any remarks of mine in times past; but as this charge has been brought

against me, I will read, by permission of the House, a passage from a speech of mine, in relation to representation by population. And I might here say that it is the only speech I ever delivered in my life, which I have ever taken any particular trouble to revise. The hon. gentleman will see, from this passage, what my sentiments were, in 1861, on the subject, while taking part in a debate on representation by population. I was replying to a speech made by my present colleague, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture. I said:—

The only feasible scheme which presented itself to his (my) mind, as a remedy for the evils complained of, was a Confederation of all the provinces. (Hear, hear.) But in speaking of a Confederation he must not be understood as alluding to it in the sense of the one on the other side of the line. For that had not been successful. But then he did not say so from any feeling of satisfaction at such a result. Far from him be any such idea. He heartily agreed with the junior member for Montreal (Hon. Mr. McGEE) in every word of regret which he had expressed at the unhappy and lamentable state of things which they now witnessed in the States, for he remembered that they were of the same blood as ourselves. He still looked hopefully to the future of the United States. He believed there was a vigor, a vitality, in the Anglo-Saxon character and the Anglo-Saxon institutions of the United States, that would carry them through this great convulsion, as they had carried through our Mother Country in days of old. (Loud cheers from both sides of the House.) He hoped with that honorable gentleman (Hon. Mr. McGEE), that if they were to be severed in two—as severed in two he believed they would be—two great, two noble, two free nations would exist in place of one. (Hear, hear.) But, while he thus sympathized with them, he must say, let it be a warning to ourselves that we do not split on the same rock which they had done. The fatal error which they had committed—and it was, perhaps, unavoidable from the state of the colonies at the time of the revolution—was in making each state a distinct sovereignty, and giving to each a distinct sovereign power, except in those instances where they were specially reserved by the Constitution and conferred upon the General Government. The true principle of a Confederation lay in giving to the General Government all the principles and powers of sovereignty, and that the subordinate or individual states should have no powers but those expressly bestowed on them. We should thus have a powerful Central Government, a powerful Central Legislature, and a decentralized system of minor legislatures for local purposes.

These, sir, were the opinions I uttered in a