

together with all the delegates from the Lower Provinces, and the result of their labors is the plan which is now laid before us. But there is more to be said, for before the present Ministry had entered upon the consideration of the plan, with their colleagues of the Gulf provinces, His Excellency had alluded to it in his Speech, and had said that it was absolutely necessary that a conclusion on the subject should be come to. And besides, the leading papers of this province and of the Lower Provinces, have long been engaged in the discussion of the question. The details have been examined in all their bearings to satiety. In view of all these facts, I would ask how it can be said that the people do not know what the question is? No; this is merely a pretext which is made use of to overthrow the plan. But another fact which goes to prove that the people have not been taken by surprise in this matter is, that within the last ten months, there have been twelve elections of legislative councillors, and it cannot be said that when those elections took place, the question of Confederation was not before the public. This would be to state a falsehood in the full glare of noonday. The hon. member for Lanaudière (Hon. Mr. OLIVIER), yesterday said that a Montreal paper had stated that he had declared himself opposed to Confederation, and he hastened to contradict the assertion. But I must say that when he appeared before his constituents and talked of retrograde steps—when he said that, for his part, he should consider it a step back in civilization, if he voted against the election of members of this House, I consider that it was idle of him to say that he had not declared himself opposed to Confederation.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—The details.

HON. SIR N. F. BELLEAU—Details and principle. I say then that at the elections which have taken place, the members elected, unless they did not choose to do their duty, must have spoken of the Confederation, and above all, of the manner in which the Legislative Council would be treated in that Confederation. And if these details were entered into, the people are acquainted with the subject in question. And not only have there been elections, but there have been public meetings in large numbers throughout the whole country,—that is to say, wherever the opponents of Confederation could get them up without

danger to themselves; and at all these meetings they did not require to be forced to speak of Confederation, and that in the most unfavorable terms possible. It is true that matters were not represented on those occasions in their true light, but the people at any rate knew what subject was under discussion. The honorable member for Wellington (Hon. Mr. SANBORN) laid great stress on the danger which might be incurred by the Protestant minority in the local legislation of Lower Canada. He fears that they may not be sufficiently protected by the Catholic majority in respect of their religion, their schools and possibly their property. I am astonished to hear such language from the lips of a man who, like myself, represents a division more than one-half of the population of which is French Canadian and Catholic, for that fact in itself is a proof of the liberality of our fellow-countrymen. I heard that remark with pain; but I can tell him that the Protestant minority of Lower Canada have nothing to fear from the Catholic majority of that province: their religion is guaranteed by treaty, and their schools and the rights which may be connected with them, are to be settled by legislation to take place hereafter, and when that legislation is laid before the Houses, those members who so greatly tremble now for the rights of the Protestant minority will have an opportunity of protecting that minority; they may then urge their reasons, and insist that the Protestants shall not be placed in a position of the slightest danger. But even granting that the Protestants were wronged by the local Legislature of Lower Canada, could they not avail themselves of the protection of the Federal Legislature? And would not the Federal Government exercise strict surveillance over the action of the local legislatures in these matters? Why should it be sought to give existence to imaginary fears in Lower Canada? I say imaginary, because the liberality of the inhabitants of Lower Canada—a liberality of which they gave proof long, long ago, by enacting the emancipation of the Jews before any other nation in the world had dreamed of such a measure—is well known. No; far from wishing to oppress other nationalities, all that the French Canadians ask is to live at peace with all the world; they are quite willing that they should enjoy their rights, provided that all live peaceably together. (Hear.)