

I cannot refrain from saying a word as to the Protestants of Lower Canada, and as to the liberality evinced towards them by the French and Catholic population. It is feared that we may combine together in order to treat them unjustly. I may be wrong in referring to the fact, but it is true that the French Canadians have always lived on more cordial terms with the English Protestants than with the Irish, who are nevertheless of the same religion, and of the same belief as themselves. If this good feeling has always existed, what is there to fear? The hon. member for Lanaudière (Hon. Mr. OLIVIER) has said, that the plan of Confederation was not necessary, and in that he agreed with the hon. member for Grandville (Hon. Mr. LETELLIER). He has stated that it would have been possible to regulate the difficulties which we have witnessed, without having recourse to Confederation, from the fact that many of these difficulties arose from the hatred existing between certain individuals. Now, for my part, I do not believe that our political men were actuated by motives of mutual hatred. When I witnessed the struggles which occurred in the House of Assembly, the votes of want of confidence which were proposed, I always felt that those who proposed them gave good reasons for so doing. But I was not aware of the existence of hatred or personal jealousy between the parties, and that upon the removal of such feelings, the difficulties might be easily overcome. But the statement is made simply for want of any sound arguments against Confederation. The same hon. member also stated, that the minorities in Upper and Lower Canada wished to know the fate reserved for them, before voting for Confederation. If he had reflected a little, he would have learned that the fate of the minorities will be defined by the law, that their religion is guaranteed by treaties, and that they will be protected by the vigilance of the Federal Government, which will never permit the minority of one portion of the Confederation to be oppressed by the majority. The hon. member also contends that the local governments ought to have larger powers than those proposed to be conferred upon them, and that the Federal Government ought to have fewer powers. To hear him, one cannot help thinking that the experience of history is entirely lost on certain individuals. He must have been aware, however, that it is in

reference to the rights of particular states, that civil war now exists in the United States; nevertheless, he would implant in this country the same germ of discord. He would have more power below and less authority above. For my part I say the very contrary, if we wish to have a strong Government capable of enforcing respect for its authority when it shall be necessary to enforce it. The hon. member also stated that he has no confidence in the exercise of the powers of the Federal Government, because it would be surrounded by a clique.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—I did not say that would be the case, but that, theoretically, it might occur, and that if it were surrounded by a clique, the rights of Lower Canada would be in danger.

HON. SIR N. F. BELLEAU—That makes no difference; for he stated that he feared the Government would be surrounded by a clique. But is it not the national representation that will surround the Federal Government? Is that a clique? To say that our Government is a clique, is to vilify the institutions of the country. The Government will be responsible to the Legislature. Let us never lose sight of the fact, that our national representatives will always see that Lower Canada shall have in the Federal Government one, or perhaps two, representatives—the number is not of importance. What is of importance is, that such one, or such two members, should represent in her Executive Council the national representation, which will be composed of 65 members, in the Federal Legislature. And this, forsooth, is called a clique! I insist somewhat at length upon this point, because the operation of the principle of responsible government in the Federal Legislature is lost sight of. I beg to call the attention of Lower Canada members to this. Suppose it were proposed to adopt a law in the Federal Legislature calculated to injure Lower Canada, our 65 representatives in the House of Commons discuss the law, and decide that they must oppose it; they at once communicate with the members of the Government representing Lower Canada, and inform them that they cannot accept the measure, and that if it be passed, they will coalesce with the minority, which always exists under responsible government, and that they will overthrow the Ministry. Such is the weight of our influence in the Federal Government; and if this were not lost sight of, there