

Canada, or of all the provinces of British North America, a remedy for all our sectional difficulties, but, on the contrary, with a steadfast resolution to labor with all their might to crush the Coalition. Such was their design, and their works have been consistent. What indeed have we since beheld? Men who for years past have devoted their pen to the unhallowed work of undermining the Catholic religion and vilifying its ministers, who have long aimed at destroying in the minds of French-Canadians all love for their peculiar institutions—the safeguards of our nationality; men who more recently promulgated dissertations on rationalism which our prelates have condemned; these men we have seen, professing to be suddenly struck and animated with flowing zeal in favor of our institutions, our religion and our clergy, take the field, and, uninvited by any, canvass the country, descending to entreat all who loved their nationality to join them in their crusade, and representing to them that those who gave in to the plans of the Government would be accessories to the annihilation of their religion, the murder of their good pastors, and the ruin of the people themselves by the load of taxes which would be laid on them. They conjured them to lose no time in protesting against this dreadful scheme of Confederation, which was sure to ruin and destroy them. Have we not seen, moreover, a press, conducted by a spirit of unbridled license, calling itself the protector of the people, scattering insults and abuse on the heads of the members of the existing Government, calumniating some and holding up all as objects of contempt, representing the Lower Canadian members of it as ready to sell their country for filthy lucre, for the fruits of office, publishing violent diatribes condemnatory of Confederation, falsely purporting to be written by members of the clergy, &c., employing, in short, all means to excite the prejudices of the people against the scheme of the Government; and what has been the result? The people listened to them, but were so far from answering to the appeal made to them, that up to this time hardly any petitions have been presented to this House against the plan of Confederation. Now, if the Opposition have not been able to convince the people that these constitutional changes are prejudicial to Lower Canada, when they discussed the subject without contradiction in their own way, will they find better success when the friends of the cause are at hand to refute their arguments and to show up what kind of patriot-

ism is theirs? I think not. I may then safely assume that the people have had the opportunity of pronouncing against the project, but have refused to do so; and the honorable member for Hochelaga is mistaken when he declares that an appeal to the country is necessary in order to ascertain the opinion of the public concerning it. Year by year that honorable gentleman complains that our election laws are defective; that money prevails to the prejudice of merit in our election contests. How can he then demand that so momentous a question as this of the union of the provinces should undergo the ordeal of a popular vote, without any other view than that of involving the country in trouble and expense to the extent of several hundred thousand dollars? I, for my part, Mr. SPEAKER, am opposed to an appeal to the people. Every member has had time to consult the opinion of his constituents at leisure, and aloof from the turmoil and agitation incidental to an election. In this way, when the project submitted by the Government shall have undergone the ordeal of a vote of this Honorable House, we shall have the satisfaction of saying with truth—"So would public opinion have it to be." It is true the honorable member for Hochelaga tells us that in all the counties in which meetings have been held, the people have given their voices against Confederation. To this assertion I have no need to make any answer. All the honorable members of this House are well aware of the means used by the opponents of Confederation to procure the passing of resolutions to their liking at meetings generally representing small, nay very small, minorities of the electors; and to cite only one example, I shall take the case of the county of Hochelaga, in which the votes are about 2,400 in number. The friends of the honorable member for that county, without any previous notice, proceeded on a certain Sunday in the month of January last to one of the parishes of that county, being that of Sault-au-Récollet, which contains about three hundred voters. There they thundered out their anathemas against Confederation, as being subversive of religion, intended to crush the clergy, and ruin the people, finishing with an appeal to the patriotism of their audience and entreaties that they would raise their voices against so objectionable a measure. Next day we read in the opposition papers: "In the county of Hochelaga, Confederation was unanimously condemned by both parties on Sunday last, at Sault-au-Récollet." The honorable gen-