

the great liberties for which he struggled and suffered. Listen to the noble utterances of that great patriot, in presence of his electors, after regaining his liberty :—

The past must not discourage us, or diminish our veneration for our Constitution. Any other form of government would be subject to the same drawback, and in fact to drawbacks far greater ; the peculiarity of our present system is, that it furnishes the means of remedying its own defects. [And he added] : We must, moreover, be prepared to make some sacrifices for the securing of these great advantages."

Such was the language of that great patriot ; not a word of bitterness, complaint, or re-orientation, but dignity of expression and a sincere conviction of the advantages of the Constitution. What a contrast, alas ! between those days of devotedness and civic courage, and the egotism and frigid indifference of our own, in which self-interest overrides everything, and patriotism has ceased to exist. The page of our history I have just read, is one which certainly should not remain unnoticed ; it is a page which our legislators would do well to consult. They would there find an example of patriotism well deserving of imitation. It is well to contemplate and study the great struggles of our forefathers, to see how victory crowned the efforts of those noble patriots—a victory dearly purchased, and of which we have up to our own day preserved the precious fruits. (Hear, hear.) But the war of 1812 broke out, and England—who has never granted us any liberties or privileges except when she needed us for her own defence on this continent—changed her tactics. She trembled for her supremacy in these British provinces, and immediately she deemed it prudent to secure our good-will, and coöperation in the struggle then about to commence—in the first place, by calling Mr. BÉDARD to a seat on the judicial bench. She understood clearly that she could do nothing against the United States without the assistance of the French-Canadian element. And the Imperial Government also hoped to recover the control of the influence and the services of the race it had treated so tyrannically. Thus it was that the man who had been cast into prison, and whom the Government had accused of treason, became the judge of the highest court in the country. The adoption of every base means of gaining adherents constituted the tactics of the Government at that period. They hoped that by thus giving a place to the man who had been the most valiant defender of our rights and of our

nationality, they would secure the adherence of the children of the soil, and they were not mistaken. In adopting that means, Mr. SPEAKER, the Imperial Government showed that they understood the character of the nation they thus sought to gain over to their cause. For it must be admitted—and it is perhaps our misfortune—that it is the peculiar characteristic of the French element, that they very often too soon forget the persecutions of which they have been the victims, and which ought to inspire them with an honest indignation when they reflect on the past. Over-confident of the sincere good will of our adversaries, we are always taken unawares at each new attempt at aggression. And even now, a few years of prosperity has been enough to dazzle us and make us anticipate a brilliant prospect in a measure which involves nothing short of the annihilation of our influence as a race, which is in fact decreed in the scheme of Confederation now sought to be forced upon the people. (Hear, hear.) But the American army threatened the frontier, and it was necessary to think of defence. With a view of being prepared for an attack, the Governor assembled Parliament twice in 1812, and measures were taken for arming the militia and voting the sums required for the organization and defence of the province. Sir GEORGE PREVOST, at the opening of Parliament in 1813, complimented the people for their courage and energy, and the proceedings were less stormy than usual ; fresh supplies were voted for the war, and a good understanding subsisted between the Government and the two Houses during the session. At that heroic period of our history, we find our French-Canadian fellow-countrymen, to whom fresh concessions had been made, obedient to the voice of their chiefs, rushing to the frontier and driving back the invader. But in 1812, as in 1775, the devotedness and patriotism of our people were destined soon to be forgotten. The moment of danger had scarcely passed away when those who had saved the power of England in America, at the price of their blood, were once more made the object of incessant attacks on the part of the English oligarchy, as I shall shortly shew. GARNEAU gives the following graphic sketch of the conduct of his countrymen at that critical period of our history :—

^ A second time was Canada preserved for England by the very people whom it was sought to annihilate ; by their bravery the colony was pre-