

municating during the winter with the Mother Country, except by passing over American soil, and our passage over that soil is merely tolerated; we may at any moment be deprived of this privilege, and in that case we should find ourselves all at once, during the long winter season, without any possible means of communication with Europe. These reasons are more than sufficient to cause us to seek to improve our position, and the only possible means by which to effect that object, is a commercial, social and political union with our sister colonies, the Maritime Provinces. I hear honorable members say—"Why not rather have the repeal of the union?" "Why not leave Upper and Lower Canada separate as they were previous to 1840?" Such a measure would probably put an end to the reiterated demands of Upper Canada for representation based upon population, and the fears entertained by Lower Canada, the fear of seeing her institutions endangered, should that system of representation be conceded; but that measure would be rather a retrograde one, which would throw the country back, and would place it in the position which it occupied previous to the union. That measure would abrogate an agreement which has long existed—a union which has proved to the country a well-spring of progress, riches and prosperity. Such a dissolution would only tend to weaken us still more, and we should be but two weak and insignificant provinces, whereas our union has converted us into one province comparatively strong. We can realize the gigantic works which have been carried out when we look upon our canals and our railways. Is there any one man endowed with ordinary fairness—any one man who has not completely taken leave of his senses, who will venture to say that Upper and Lower Canada would have been as far advanced, each of them, as they now are, if they had remained separate, with tariffs inimical the one to the other? "Soon or than have Confederation," will exclaim an opponent, root and branch, of the scheme proposed, "let us concede to Upper Canada representation adjusted on the basis of population wholly and entirely, as the honorable member for Hochelaga would appear in his celebrated manifesto of 1865 to desire;" but this is positively absurd—it is a violation of the spirit and the letter of the Union Act of 1840; it is the principal source of all the difficulties of a sectional nature which have proved the source of difficulty, both in this House

and throughout the country, for several years past. It would be asking for the utter ruin of the civil and religious rights of the French-Canadians. Under such melancholy circumstances, Mr. SPEAKER, what is then left for us? There is left for us the Confederation of all the British Provinces in North America. That is the only possible remedy under existing circumstances. Of two alternatives we must select one. Either we shall form part of a Confederation of the British North American Provinces, or we shall fall into the unfathomable gulf of the Confederation of the neighboring States, formerly the United States. (Hear, hear.) How absurd are they who believe that the United States do not want us, with our mineral wealth and our fisheries, which latter are of themselves an inexhaustible source of riches to the country! The United States did not, in 1776, number more than four millions of inhabitants; there were then only thirteen states; now there are thirty-one states and seven territories—at least that was the number before the war—and a population of more than thirty millions. We know that the prodigious growth of the United States is owing to their purchases, their treaties and their conquests. They want us, and would stir heaven and earth to have us in their grasp. (Hear, hear.) Let us beware! We stand on the brink of the yawning gulf of the American Confederation, falling into which we encounter, first, our share of liability to pay a national debt of three thousand millions of dollars, and an annual expenditure of five hundred millions; and next, a share of their national quarrels and civil wars. Exposed to persecution by the conqueror, and loaded with the heavy burthen of enormous debts incurred in the prosecution of a cruel and fratricidal war—a war of which, be it said, everybody knows the beginning, but of which nobody knows the end—the uncalculating opponents of the measure before us will regret their obstinacy and their disregard of their country's weal. Then they will see the naked features of those democratic institutions which are in reality inconsistent with true liberty—of those boasted institutions, under whose influence the last vestiges of liberty have faded away, as does the light at the close of a bright day. Under them the liberty of the press is unknown; under them, liberty is but a name, a dream, an illusion, a mockery, often a snare; under them no man can venture to speak frankly what he thinks, and must take care