

among us is prepared for either of these alternatives? Am I to suppose that the people of this province of French origin are less loyal to the British Crown than those of Anglo-Saxon descent? Am I to believe that were the opportunity afforded them, they would reunite themselves with France? These questions, I am assured, they will answer indignantly in the negative. At all events, of this I am satisfied, and I believe they are satisfied, that under no government in the world can they enjoy so large an amount of civil, political and religious liberty as under British sway. The Scotch have their history and their traditions as well as the French, but where is the Scotchman now that is not proud of his alliance with England, or that would wish to dis sever the connection, though thereby he might regain his parliament or his king? I believe that every enlightened French-Canadian is of the same opinion, whatever hot-blooded and hair-brained demagogues may assert to the contrary. (Hear, hear.) Take the question of religious creeds. These are said to present an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the settlement of our sectional difficulty. If, sir, we had established in this province a non-Catholic or Protestant creed, to which all would be required to subscribe, or if not to subscribe, at least to support by compulsory taxation, then, sir, I could conceive that difference of religious opinion might operate in the way alleged; but as among us the most complete religious liberty is enjoyed—yes, a larger amount of religious liberty than Catholic Christians are allowed in France—I can see no valid ground for the supposition that they would suffer in this respect, or that they ever had the shadow of a reason to fear that in doing an act of justice to Upper Canadians they would be doing injustice to themselves. (Hear, hear.) We are, all of us, too much and too deeply interested in the question of religious liberty, to trespass on the rights of conscience, or to allow of state interference in matters of such transcendent importance as our relations to the Divine Being, and the service and worship we owe to Him. Differing as we do in our creed and modes of worship, religious equality is necessary to the peace and good order of government, as well as to the life of religion itself among the people. We thus become the guardians of the most precious of all liberties, the right to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience,

without let or hindrance from each other or the state. (Hear, hear.) But it is said that the civil institutions of Lower Canada would suffer, were Upper Canada allowed a representation in the Legislature and the Government in proportion to its population. I marvel, sir, much that such a difficulty as this should ever have been started. It is well known that the policy of Great Britain has ever been of the most liberal and comprehensive character in relation to matters of this kind. Trace her history in connection with her conquest in any part of the world; and when, except with the consent of the people, has she imposed upon them the body of her statute laws? Her Constitution and her common law of right belong to the peoples subjected to her sway, and these are the guardians of personal and public liberty; but beyond these she allows the largest freedom in respect of customs, the peculiar institutions, and the administration of civil justice throughout the length and breadth of her dominions. However desirable the assimilation of the laws between Upper and Lower Canada may be, uniformity would be purchased at too dear a rate, if it led to dissatisfaction among any considerable class of the people. Time may accomplish what force might destroy. As an Englishman, whilst I believe our laws, in the main, as well as our whole judicial system, are the best in the world, I do not believe either the one or the other to be perfect. To improve them by importing into them whatever is more excellent in other systems, is the dictate of common sense, and will always have my hearty concurrence. The institutions of Lower Canada are perfectly safe in the keeping of Lower Canadians, for practically nothing could be gained by Upper Canadians in changing them, supposing they had the power to do so, which they neither have nor desire to have. (Hear, hear.) And then, sir, with respect to language, I can hardly suppose Lower Canadians serious when they imagine that any desire exists to destroy the use among them of their mother-tongue. It may do well enough to excite a prejudice among ignorant people to say so, but surely among those that are intelligent it can have no effect. It remains with French-Canadians themselves to determine whether they will abandon the use of their native tongue, and adopt ours, or not. They are free to use either, or both, at pleasure. If, sir, in Lower Canada the English are