

We constitute the highest branch of the Parliament of this country, and when the Lower Provinces hear that we have voted for this measure in the shape in which it has been laid before us, they will naturally and with reason believe that our vote has been given with a thorough knowledge of the matter, and that we fully indicate the popular feeling on this important question. They will never for a moment imagine that we have set at naught and ignored the opinions of those whom we represent in this House; they will never believe that the country has been so little consulted in the matter as it in fact has been. I assert, therefore, honorable gentlemen, that the vote which it is sought to make us give to-day is calculated to deceive the people of the Lower Provinces, both as to the views of this Honorable House and as to the opinions of the vast majority of the people of this province, and that we cannot give it with satisfaction either to ourselves or to those whom we represent. I have already taken occasion to state before to-day, that the scheme of Confederation had not been submitted to us complete. I am prepared to prove this statement; I maintain that only one part of the scheme has been laid before us, and under these circumstances, I would ask this Honorable House, if it is prudent to accept and sanction that with which we are but imperfectly acquainted? When I accepted from my constituents their nomination to the Legislative Council, I did so with the firm determination never to accept blindly the various measures which might be submitted for my approval in this House. This resolution I have adhered to hitherto, and I hope that I shall never forget it in the course of my public career. A few minutes ago I remarked, honorable gentlemen, that the plan of Confederation had not been submitted to us complete; I now propose to prove this assertion. By art. 6 of the 43rd resolution, we perceive that the local legislatures will have the power of making laws in relation to education, saving, however, the rights and privileges enjoyed by the Catholic and Protestant minorities in relation to their separate schools at the time of the union; so that by this resolution we are to affirm that the minorities shall be bound by the school laws which will be in force at the moment when Confederation will take effect. On the other hand, we are told that a measure will be brought down for the better protection of the rights of the Protestant minority

in Lower Canada, whilst at the same time we are not informed whether the same advantages will be accorded to the Catholic minority in Upper Canada. Thus these school laws form a portion of the scheme upon which we are called to vote, and if unfortunately, after we have adopted these resolutions we are unable to obtain justice for the Upper Canadian minority, shall we not be guilty of having voted for the scheme without having known all about it? We ought then to be on our guard. If, as it is pretended, the measure will not endanger the rights of the Catholic minority in Upper Canada, why are we refused the details and the information which we ask to have afforded to us before pronouncing on the merits of the plan? I maintain that any one who desires that justice should be extended to the minorities in question, would not know how to vote as we are called upon to do. In the absence of the information which we are entitled to demand from the Government as to the nature of the guarantees to be offered by the new Constitution to the minorities of the two provinces of Canada, I do not for one instant hesitate to declare that this Honorable House is justified, and indeed fulfils a sacred duty in demanding the delay sought for by the motion of the hon. member for Niagara. If it should so happen that the people are called upon to pronounce on the merits of the measure, it becomes of the utmost necessity that we, their representatives, should be able to explain and point out to them the details of the scheme. We have then every reason to insist that this information should be supplied to us. The Premier will now permit me to put to him a question. May it not happen, after the adoption of these resolutions, that the Protestant majority of Upper Canada may ally itself with the Protestant minority of Lower Canada in the present Parliament, and deprive the Catholic majority of Upper Canada of the rights which they are entitled to enjoy in relation to the education of their children? Should such an event occur, I would ask the hon. Premier what means the aggrieved minority might be able to adopt in order to obtain justice?

HON. SIR E. P. TACHÉ—I will inform you when the proper time comes.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—The hon. the Premier ought to give us the details of the measure on this subject. I do not mean to assert that I am opposed to every possible