

particular. We shall probably see influences brought to bear there, as occurred once before when the Legislative Council was made elective. The Lower Canada members will recollect that when the law was passed in England, under influences which to this day remains unearthed, the clause was blotted out from our Constitution which we in Lower Canada justly regarded as our only safeguard against the encroachments and the domination of Upper Canada; and in point of fact, for the striking out or changing of that clause, Upper Canada would never have demanded representation by population, and the difficulties which have resulted from this question would not have occurred, and we should have heard nothing of the Confederation measure which is now before us. Had the people of Upper Canada been well convinced that the Constitution could not be changed, they would have submitted to sacrifices rather than create a useless agitation. It is said that we are to have guarantees for our institutions. But who will say that the guarantees left to us may not vanish when the measure reaches England, in the same way as the guarantee we had against representation by population? At all events I still maintain that our institutions are not guaranteed in any way whatsoever, and this is clearly shown by Sir N. F. BELLEAU himself, as I have already had occasion to prove. We are asked to sacrifice the election of the Legislative Council; but is the system proposed a better one? I do not think so, for to my mind the mode in which it is proposed to constitute that House appears to be unsound in every way. Not only are the people to be deprived of an important right, but the prerogative of the Crown is to be infringed by limiting the number of members to be appointed. It is painful to take a backward step of this kind, and to abandon a reform, the fruit of the persevering struggles of so many eminent men; and I believe that if we consent to this change, the consequences of the act will soon be seen. In order to show that the defects of the system are very real, I will cite the opinion of the Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, set forth in his despatch to the Governor General, relative to the project of Confederation and to the new Constitution for the Legislative Council. This is what Mr. CARDWELL says:—

The second point which Her Majesty's Government desire should be reconsidered is the Consti-

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tution of the Legislative Council. They appreciate the considerations which have influenced the Conference in determining the mode in which this body, so important to the constitution of the Legislature, should be composed. But it appears to them to require further consideration, whether, if the members be appointed for life, and their number be fixed, there will be any sufficient means of restoring harmony between the Legislative Council and the popular Assembly, if it shall ever unfortunately happen that a decided difference of opinion shall arise between them.

After this formal condemnation of the project of Confederation, and in view of our own experience, it seems to me that we are quite justified in opposing it, and in anticipating that the Legislative Council will become again, as it formerly was, an obstacle in the way of all reform and of all progress, unless the present plan of Confederation be amended. (Cheers.)

HON. MR. FERRIER said—Honorable gentlemen, I had almost resolved to give a silent vote for the resolutions now before the House, but having, especially since I have had the honour of a seat in the Legislative Council, been accustomed to take note of passing events in the history of Canada, I think I may be allowed to occupy a short time in speaking of what has transpired in this country in past years, and more particularly of what has transpired within the last twelve months. In past years there were two great questions which had agitated both Eastern and Western Canada. The one was the Seigniorial question in Lower Canada; the other was the Clergy Reserve question in Western Canada. These two questions, for many years, occupied the attention of the Legislature and of the statesmen conducting successive governments. At last a settlement of these important questions was arrived at—I believe satisfactory to the majority of the people. Since that time no great questions of public interest have occupied the minds of the people, or have been urged either by the Government of the day or by the leaders of the Opposition. The consequence has been that a political warfare has been waged in Canada for many years, of a nature calculated almost to destroy all correct political and moral principle, both in the Legislature and out of it. Has it not been the fact that any man who, through life, had sustained a good character, either as a private individual or a professional man, no sooner accepted office in the Government than the Opposition and the Opposition papers would attack him at once as having joined a very doubtful company?