

Confederation, and he would have us give up all the rights which the existing Constitution confers upon us, by voting in favor of a Local Legislature of which the powers will be naught, and of a General Parliament in which we shall be in the proportion of one to four. Mr. SPEAKER, it is not surprising that the French-Canadian population of Lower Canada is unanimous in rejecting a Confederation which presents to us so gloomy a future—(hear, hear)—and I do not fear to declare that our Ministers are committing an act of very great imprudence in forcing upon the people constitutional changes of so serious a character, and so loudly denounced as an attack on their rights and their privileges. Never, at any period of our history, have there been seen such changes of constitution under such extraordinary circumstances. And exactly at the moment when we are preparing to resist the invading army of a powerful neighbor, we are deprived of the liberties which we enjoy after having secured them by a century of struggles. But it seems to me that new guarantees of security ought rather to be given us, in order to induce us to fight with warlike antagonists ten times more numerous than ourselves, and whose political organization is perhaps less hostile to our race than the proposed Confederation. Have not the present Ministry taught us to look upon the semblance of local government, which they propose to us, as a sufficient protection for all that we hold most dear, and to accept the position of a powerless minority in the General Government, because commercial interests only will be brought in question there? If this proposition is a just one, the Constitution of the United States, with the recognized sovereignty of Lower Canada, affords much greater security for our institutions, our language and our laws. For the sovereignty of the state implies their preservation in the state, which yields up nothing to the General Government except a very restricted number of powers. Yes, Mr. SPEAKER, in proposing a change of Constitution the Ministry have committed a serious fault, and they have no right to endeavor to prevent the people of this province from examining the question of possible changes in all its bearings. Scarcely six months ago the French-Canadians lived happily, relying upon the security given them by the existing Constitution. Now such can hardly be the case, when the proposed changes threaten their existence as a race, impose these

changes upon them, and then let danger come, and England will find out, but too late, that her most loyal subjects are lost to her. Our people will have learned that of two evils they must choose the least, and that on a comparison between Confederation and annexation, the least evil will not, unfortunately, be found to be Confederation. Before marching on to certain slaughter, the soldier will ask himself for what he is going to fight, and whether the Constitution which he is going to defend is worth the sacrifice of his life's blood. The day upon which the French-Canadian soldier puts this question to himself, will be the last day of the English power in America. I hope I may be mistaken, Mr. SPEAKER, and I would wish to believe that the views of the Government are sounder than mine, at a time when they propose a measure so full of danger as that which is submitted to us. I would wish to believe, above all, that they have no intention of skilfully leading us into a collision with our neighbors, which would tend to carry us directly into annexation, and would strike a mortal blow at English domination on this continent. I shall conclude, Mr. SPEAKER, by summing up my remarks. The union of the two Canadas has not yet done all its work. There is still room for progress under it, and it must be continued. The Hon. Attorney General for Lower Canada (Hon. Mr. CARTIER) maintains on the contrary that it has no longer any grounds of existence, and that we must have a new political organization. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, I venture to hold an opinion different from that of the hon. member for Montreal East, and I have no hesitation in saying that under the union we can yet double our prosperity and our numbers, if we introduce into the administration of affairs a little less party spirit and a little more patriotism. (Hear, hear.) I say, further, that the demand for representation based on population has no cause of existence, that it was repudiated by Upper Canada, at first by the Conservative party, and afterwards by the Liberal party under the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Administration. When we have seen the most energetic and most sincere partisans of representation based on population abandon that principal basis of their politics, and make of it, in their government, a question against which they engaged to vote, I say that it is very wrong to use it as one of the reasons to compel us to accept the scheme of Confederation. That cry, raised by fan-