

ments, then so full of power, lost all their force and value to-day? Have they become futile since the alliance of the Honorable Attorney General East and the hon. member for South Oxford? Can they no longer be used to save our Constitution and our liberties? How can the party which has so long been kept together by its opposition to the principle of representation by population, say to-day that it is a just principle, and that it must be conceded? I confess, Mr. SPEAKER, that I cannot understand why we should concede to-day what we refused in 1860. It is true that I do not possess the experience of the hon. gentlemen who now occupy the Ministerial benches, and that, perhaps, it may be wiser to bend to-day than to be broken to-morrow; but when I study the history of the past, when I look at things as they are, and look forward to the future which is now proposed for us, I only see in the scheme of Confederation a remedy which is more violent than the disease, and which, instead of removing the difficulties it is proposed to eradicate, will only have the effect of producing results the most unfavorable to the peace and prosperity of our country. I stated then, Mr. SPEAKER, that the question of representation by population, which has been the principal cause of the Confederation scheme, was excluded from the political programme of the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Government, and that the Upper Canada majority, the leaders of which, throughout their whole political career, had so loudly demanded this concession in favor of Upper Canada, had bound itself not to raise that exciting question within the halls of the Legislature, at least during the existence of the MACDONALD-SICOTTE Ministry. (Hear, hear.) I stated that, thanks to the patriotic firmness of that Administration, Lower Canada was enabled for two years to live in peace and enjoy the fruits of a tranquillity unknown for ten years previous, and during two sessions the question of representation based on numbers ceased to be a subject of strife and fanatical attack on the part of Upper Canada. (Hear, hear.) It was at that period that the honorable member for South Oxford asked for a committee to enquire as to the means of settling the sectional difficulties, by effecting a change in the basis of the present Constitution. (Hear, hear.) Well, Mr. SPEAKER, what took place then? We saw that able speaker, that indefatigable and powerful advocate of the

claims of Upper Canada against the Lower Canada section, unable to find in this House more than forty men prepared to support him in his unjust demand for a constitutional change which the present Administration are about to grant. (Hear, hear.) We saw that powerful politician humbled, and giving up in despair all hopes of succeeding with the House—and, for my part, Mr. SPEAKER, I must say that I felt pained at his position—asking a leave of absence in order to avoid a humiliating defeat, and returning to his home to lament his fall and the loss of an influence based solely on fanaticism and prejudice. (Hear, hear.) Subsequently, Mr. SPEAKER, the House witnessed an act which I do not desire to characterize now; we saw the Administration which had the courage to chain down the monster of representation by population, overthrown by a French-Canadian majority! (Hear, hear.) Yes, Mr. SPEAKER, that Liberal government, which had afforded so much security to our institutions by maintaining intact our present Constitution, was defeated by a French-Canadian majority of this House. I do not intend, when I say this, to attack my fellow-countrymen, far from it; but I wish to trace the parliamentary history of our country, and I do not hesitate to assert that that vote gave a fatal blow to our influence as French-Canadians, and that posterity will record that vote, which is now a matter of history, as a fatal act by which our public men sacrificed to party spirit the dearest of our interests. (Hear, hear.) I fearlessly assert, Mr. SPEAKER, that for fifteen years our affairs had not been administered by men more sincerely devoted to our interests and better able to protect the political liberties, the interests and the institutions of Lower Canada. What have we seen during the past fifteen years in this House? We have witnessed party appeals to prejudices and the most insulting personalities; and, in fact, the lowering of the moral status of our national representatives, as the natural result. We have seen the men best qualified to enforce, on the floor of this House, the rights of the people, refusing to come forward at elections, because they saw that the position of a member of Parliament no longer conferred that degree of dignity and position which made it an object of ambition in better times. We have seen men of eminence, who had labored in behalf of the interests of their constituents for many long years, abandoning their political