

district of Three Rivers is not behind other districts in the country, either in industrial success or in the energy and enterprise of its inhabitants. The Arthabaska Railway, which it was said would not pay running expenses, is at present more productive than any part of the Grand Trunk Railway. We need colonization roads and railways, and I am convinced that under the Confederation, when we shall have the management of our own funds without the interference of Upper Canada, we shall build railways in all parts where the requirements of trade and industrial pursuits call for them. We shall then offer to the settler well-made and well-kept roads, and the district of Three Rivers will derive precious results from them, as well as other districts of the country. (Hear, Hear.) We have a proof of the rapidity with which the district of Three Rivers would grow, if it were encouraged. This is found in the parishes of St. Maurice, St. Etienne, Ste. Flore and Shawinigan. It is nearly twenty-five years since St. Maurice was a mere forest; now it is a large, rich, and beautiful parish, of which the district of Three Rivers has reason to be proud. It numbers upwards of five hundred voters with the parish of Mont Carmel, which is an offset from it. The extensive trade in timber which is carried on in the valley of the St. Maurice, and which employs thousands of laborers, is an important element in the commercial business of the country, exporting to a great amount the lumber which is taken from the extensive territory—if I may be allowed the expression—belonging to the district of Three Rivers; and these vast tracts which await the settler, those iron mines so rich and so well known, those mines of other minerals still hidden in the mountains and valleys of the St. Maurice, those riches of all kinds which abound there await only the hand of man to render the district and city of Three Rivers an important part of Lower Canada. (Hear, hear.) The Ministers of the Crown in Canada have been accused of bringing up the question of Confederation only as a means of retaining power and increasing it. The Hon. Attorney General for Lower Canada has been accused of moving that measure only that he may become Lieutenant-Governor of Lower Canada. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, I am thoroughly convinced that that honorable Minister has too much energy, is too laborious, to seek or to accept an office

in which he would have nothing to do. (Hear, hear.) For my part, I make a present to the Opposition of all the profit I am likely to derive from places or dignities under Confederation, when we have it. I repel the idea that Canadian statesmen allowed themselves to be influenced by paltry notions of personal interest, when they set about devising means to extricate us from the difficulties in which we were involved. They had in view only the interests of the nation, and never had a thought, as some have insinuated, of delivering the country up to ruin and desolation. I conclude, Mr. SPEAKER, by declaring that I am in favor of Confederation, and opposed to the appeal to the people, because I believe it to be perfectly useless. An hon. member who spoke yesterday told us that the clergy are not qualified to form a judgment on the project of Confederation. Now, I ask you, if the clergy are not qualified to form a judgment on such a question, how the people can form one who have not the necessary education? How can they comprehend the aggregate and the details of the scheme, and ascertain whether it would be beneficial to them or not? I repeat that I am in favor of the project now under consideration—first, because I declared myself favorable to the measure when I presented myself to my constituents; and, secondly, because I think it necessary and even indispensable, and calculated moreover to promote the interests of the country in general, and those of Lower Canada and the district of Three Rivers in particular.—(Cheers.)

MR. GAGNON — Mr. SPEAKER, the scheme of a Confederation of the provinces now before this House is one too deeply interesting to be received in silence. If I rise to speak on this occasion, it is for the simple purpose of justifying my opinion on the subject, by stating my reasons for entertaining it; and as I am not in the habit of making speeches, I crave the indulgence of the House. It is the opinion of members on the other side of the House that the country will derive great advantages from this union; but those advantages depend, as most people think, on the contingencies of an unknown future, and by others, are looked upon as the doubtful results of a hazardous and dangerous speculation, which will involve the ruin of our credit. Not only, Mr. SPEAKER, do we risk our capital, which will be lost in the execution of this great scheme;