

fed in saying what I said; but after the explanations which the hon. gentleman has just given, I cannot accuse him of having done it otherwise than inadvertently. The honorable member for Hochelaga stated that the memorial submitted by the Government at the time of its formation spoke of a Confederation other than the one which it now proposes. It will be well to refer to the document in question in order to ascertain its contents. The memorial consists of two parts, of which the following is the first:—

The Government are prepared to state that immediately after the prorogation, they will address themselves, in the most earnest manner, to the negotiation for a Confederation of all the British North American Provinces.

That failing a successful issue to such negotiations, they are prepared to pledge themselves to legislation, during the next session of Parliament, for the purpose of remedying existing difficulties by introducing the Federal principle for Canada alone, coupled with such provisions as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-Western territory to be hereafter incorporated into the Canadian system.

In other words, the Government promises, in the first part of the memorial in question, to direct its attention to a Confederation of all the British North American Provinces; and, in the event of its not succeeding in carrying out that object, to turn its attention to a Confederation of the two Canadas. And now here are the contents of the second part:—

The Government are prepared to pledge themselves to bring in a measure, next session, for the purpose of removing existing difficulties, by introducing the Federal principle into Canada, coupled with such provision as will permit the Maritime Provinces and the North-West territory to be incorporated into the same system of government.

And the Government will seek, by sending representatives to the Lower Provinces and to England, to secure the assent of those interests which are beyond the control of our own legislation, to such a measure as may enable all British North America to be united under a General Legislature based upon the Federal principle.

Well, where is the contradiction between these promises and the present action of the Government? We begin with a plan of Confederation for the two Canadas, and subsequently, finding that the Maritime Provinces are ready to enter upon the consideration of a more extensive union, we have made arrangements to bring them at once into the Confederation. There is no contra-

diction in that, but it is the same measure and the same plan; the only difference is, that, instead of admitting them into the union some six or nine months hence, we have admitted them at once. When we approached the question, we found the Maritime Provinces in process of deliberating upon a union amongst themselves; but the Charlottetown delegates perceived that the Confederation which we proposed to them would be much more advantageous to all the provinces than that upon which they were engaged, and they at once consented to accept our proposition. Accordingly they came to Quebec, and the result of their visit was the plan which has been submitted to this House. The hon. member for Hochelaga has, therefore, no right to reproach us with having altered the plan promised to the House, since it is word for word that which we promised. This measure, as I observed a short time ago, cannot last, unless it protects the interests of all. Now, we have different interests in Lower Canada, in which reside two populations differing in origin, differing in religion, and speaking different languages. On the other hand, Upper Canada has a homogeneous population, but one professing different religions, and so it is with respect to the several Maritime Provinces. In these latter provinces, also, we have more than one hundred thousand fellow countrymen of French origin. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, we have taken care to protect these different interests, and to preserve the rights of this population, by uniting them in the Confederation to a people numbering a million souls of the same origin as themselves. But we are told: "You wish to form a new nationality." Let us come to an understanding on this word, Mr. SPEAKER. What we desire and wish, is to defend the general interests of a great country and of a powerful nation, by means of a central power. On the other hand, we do not wish to do away with our different customs, manners and laws; on the contrary, those are precisely what we are desirous of protecting in the most complete manner by means of Confederation. Under the new system there will be no more reason than at present to lose our character as French or English, under the pretext that we should all have the same general interests; and our interests in relation to race, religion and nationality will remain as they