

(Hear, hear.) As to us, French-Canadians and Catholics, what have we to fear from Confederation? Our language, our rights and our privileges are guaranteed to us. Look at the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; does it not consist of three distinct nations, holding several religious creeds? Those three nations have fought side by side on sea and land for ages, against the enemies of their country. What glorious victories, what noble deeds in arms have they achieved! And the most perfect harmony exists among them. In England, are the Jews persecuted, deprived of their rights and privileges? Are the Roman Catholics? Is there not residing in the very capital of England a prince of the Romish Church—Cardinal WISEMAN? And, Mr. SPEAKER, who would have believed the fact?—the last census shows that the city of London contains 100,000 Catholics more than Rome itself—Rome the seat of the Catholic Church! And a greater number of Jews than there are in Judea or all Palestine! (Hear, hear.) And yet all these people enjoy their respective rights and privileges, and worship their Creator according to the traditions of their forefathers, unmolested, undisturbed by any. (Cheers.) I now come to the plan of Confederation considered intrinsically. I shall not enter into a discussion of its details; four members of the Administration have given us explanations of it which were so clear and lucid, that it is useless to enter on the subject anew. There are, no doubt, certain points which are not all that we could desire; there are certain articles which I should be disposed to reject if I were not aware that we are to look at the question from five different points of view, and not from one sectional point of view. I can conceive that the Conference considered the plan as a compromise—a treaty in which the five provinces were the contracting parties; that many concessions were found to be necessary, to satisfy the interests of individuals or of localities; that great conciliation was an important element, with a strong wish, by great concessions on all sides, to carry forward an important negotiation, which in their absence would have utterly failed! I am, moreover, convinced that the Ministers of Canada did everything in their power to promote and guard our general and local interests; that their only aim was to make us a great and strong nation; that the dominant idea in their minds was that “a Federal union,” under the protection of England, would be for Canada a harbor of

refuge from all storms, particularly that which now assails us, as well as conducive to advance the best interests and the prosperity of all the provinces; that this union would secure to us the continued enjoyment of our laws and institutions, of our liberties and our relations with the Mother Country, while it would facilitate the development of our national, social, commercial and political prosperity. If we do not adopt it as a whole, if we meddle with its clauses to make radical changes in it, the other contracting parties, justly offended, will reject it wholly, as they understand that we have no right to depart from its provisions without their consent; or if following our example, the Maritime Provinces should also make changes in it, the whole plan would be so mutilated and disfigured, that it would become a mark for universal disapprobation, and all the labors of the Conference would be rendered useless and abortive. Moreover, if in the meantime the Maritime Provinces, taking up again their old scheme of a union among themselves, should refuse to listen to any overtures we might make, we should, like madmen, have lost the golden opportunity. Nothing would remain for us but annexation to the United States—an idea most abhorrent to my feelings, but one which is, perhaps, in reality, the cherished desire of the unreasoning opponents of the present measure. (Hear.) As a British subject, I find most pleasure in that article of the scheme which declares the Sovereign of Great Britain to be the head of the Executive. The monarchical element will predominate in the Constitution, and we shall thus escape that weakness which is inherent in the Constitution of the neighboring States. Their President, Mr. SPEAKER, is no more than the fortunate chief of a party; he can never be regarded as the father of his people; his reign is but temporary; he is, for four years, a kind of despot, with unlimited power and immense patronage; his favors fall on those only who have elected him, and who can elect him anew at the expiration of four years; none feel the refreshing dews of his favors, save his party. Woe to the unlucky ones who have voted against him at his election! For them there is no smile, no gracious acceptance, no favors. Under the working of our Constitution, on the contrary, as the sovereign is permanent (“the King is dead—God save the King!”) we have at all times in him a father, whose interest and whose