

knows or ought to know that it is about \$140. Nevertheless he drew a comparison showing that while the comparatively poor people of Canada would have to pay \$25 per head, the rich people of Great Britain had only \$37 to pay. It is very remarkable, however, that the whole of this portion of the honorable gentleman's speech was omitted from the report given in the papers next morning. I do not propose to go into these figures, but merely to refer to a few facts to place the assertions made by that honorable gentleman in their true light before the House. Our debt is indeed very large, and we could all wish that it was very much less than it is, but we have got to bear it and to pay it, and must do the best we can under the circumstances. The measure of Confederation, in my opinion, will not add to nor yet lessen it, except what may be incurred for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. It is quite possible, of course, that we may undertake enormous expenditures for public works calculated to open up and develop the resources of the country, and thus soon render our debt much heavier than at present, and it will be a question for the Government that may be established after Confederation, to decide how far it will be wise or prudent to undertake works of great cost until we shall have a good surplus in hand. (Hear, hear.) One of the objections urged by the opponents of the measure is, that it is being hurried through too fast—that in a matter of so much importance to present and future generations, more time for consideration should be given. We have been discussing this question for many years in Canada West. Since the Toronto Convention of 1859, the question has been continuously before the people. It is now nearly a year since it was proposed in something like its present shape in this House, and since that time the whole of our newspapers have been writing upon it continually. We have nearly 300 newspapers in the country—and they have been carrying on a constant argument for or against the scheme, until I do not think it is possible to say or write much more upon the subject with any advantage. If the question is not now fully understood, I fear it will not be much better understood by any delay that can be now accorded. (Hear, hear.) Another objection raised is, that a measure of such vast importance ought not to be carried through without its first being submitted to the people. I have mixed with the people a good deal, and I have found the opinion all but universal amongst them,

that it was expedient to put the measure into practical operation as soon as possible. The people consider it utterly impossible to carry on the former violent political agitation with any benefit to the country, and the desire is general that we should get rid of the present constitutional difficulties and get settled down to some quiet and permanent way of managing our governmental business and political discussions. (Hear, hear.) The charges that are made against members of this House about inconsistency in advocating this measure, are very easily met. In a country like ours, so full of change, with a constant agitation going on for constitutional changes and for new laws, both local and general, it is utterly impossible that a man can remain long in public life without being open to charges of inconsistency; but if these are caused by a strong effort to settle the difficulties under which the country has been laboring, like the present one, I feel certain that the success of the measure in hand will render the charges of only evanescent existence. I think it exceedingly desirable, even for the sake of those people who might reasonably feel the strongest objections to it—I mean the English minority of Lower Canada, and the Catholic minority of Upper Canada—that it should be settled at once. So long as the question remains in its present state, there will be a constant agitation going on, and much injury may be done by the misrepresentations that will be indulged in, and the misapprehensions which will exist; but if these people can be assured that the scheme provides a perfect remedy for any injustice that they might apprehend, they will immediately concur in it. As regards the people of Lower Canada of French origin, and who are Roman Catholics, I have always heard it said in their favor, that a large degree of liberalism characterizes their conduct toward their Protestant neighbors. (Hear, hear.) Lower Canada, I believe, was the first portion of British territory to give political freedom to the Jew. I believe that a person of this persuasion sat in the Lower Canada Legislature thirty years before the same privileges were accorded in Great Britain. People who charged the French Canadians with intolerance should remember this with some degree of favor. With regard to the people of British origin, over the whole Confederacy, I do not think it is at all necessary to defend them from any charges of this kind. I do not think they will be inclined to persecute the people of Lower Canada if they had it in their power; but I ad-