

religion. with that great party which possesses the confidence of a large majority of the inhabitants of this country. (Cheers.)

DR. PAQUET — Mr. SPEAKER, although I am not in the habit of addressing the House, and although the question now under consideration has already been discussed at great length, I cannot allow so important an occasion to pass without making known the reasons which induce me to protest against the constitutional changes which are now proposed, and which tend to nothing less than the complete overthrowing of the Constitution under which we have been governed since the union of Upper and Lower Canada. Since the prorogation of Parliament in June last, I have endeavored in vain to explain to myself the advantages which we, Lower Canadians, would derive from Confederation, and I had lost myself in the motives and the object of a union of this kind, when I had the opportunity of reading in the speech of the honorable member for Sherbrooke that "the scheme of Confederation had not been a new question since the days of Lord DURHAM, that only the question of carrying it into effect was wanting." After having read this significant passage, I set myself to work to study and ascertain what were the tendencies and spirit which actuated Lord DURHAM, and more especially, what object he had in view. I did not take long to convince myself, as any Lower Canadian member may do on reading his celebrated report, that everything he had in view was calculated to secure our annihilation as French-Canadians, and that he desired neither more nor less than to subject us to a ruling power exclusively English. When we see, Mr. SPEAKER, the hon. members from Upper Canada rejoicing over such a scheme, and declaring themselves so much the more satisfied from the fact that they would obtain, by this fine stroke of policy, more than they had at first hoped for, when the honorable member for Lambton (Mr. A. MACKENZIE), whilst avowing, as he has always done, that his views are but incompletely expressed in the language which I am about to read, there is reason for some little alarm. This is what that honorable gentleman said in the House the other night:—

I believe then, sir, in the first place, that Confederation is desirable; in the second, that it is attainable; and in the third place, that it is the best thing we can get, and this last is perhaps the strongest reason of all for accepting it. It is quite clear that we must have a settlement of our difficulties in some way, and I think the scheme

proposed is a very favorable settlement of them. I think it is more than, perhaps, some of us expected, at the time when the present Government was formed, to bring about a settlement, and I do think, sir, it would be the greatest act of madness that western members of this House could perpetrate, to vote against it. (Hear, hear.) I am not, however, afraid that it will be voted against by them. I believe that under it we have obtained representation by population, that we have obtained what we have long contended was justly due to us, that we have obtained our legitimate influence in framing the financial policy of the country, and that beyond this we have obtained the prospect of building up a great British union on this continent. We should therefore, I think, in view of these great advantages, overlook those objections which may be regarded as antecedent to the scheme, and endeavor heartily to carry out the work successfully. I shall willingly yield my support to the scheme, and I believe it will be acceptable to the people I represent—not only to the people of the locality, but to those who surround me in Upper Canada.

If, Mr. SPEAKER, honorable gentlemen from Upper Canada are permitted to give utterance to such opinions as these, I hope that my fellow-countrymen from Lower Canada will permit me to vindicate their rights. (Hear, hear.) But let us proceed to examine this Confederation, to which the practical question is alone wanting. I read from the report of Lord DURHAM:—

I entertain no doubts as to the national character which must be given to Lower Canada; it must be that of the British Empire; that of the majority of the population of British America; that of the great race which must, in the lapse of no long period of time, be predominant over the whole North American continent. Without effecting the change so rapidly or roughly as to shock the feelings and trample on the welfare of the existing generation, it must henceforth be the first and steady purpose of the British Government to establish an English population, with English laws and language, in this province, and to trust its government to none but a decidedly English legislature.

A little further on in the same report, I read as follows:—

If the population of Upper Canada is rightly estimated at 400,000, the English inhabitants of Lower Canada at 150,000 and the French at 450,000, the union of the two provinces will not only give a clear English majority, but one which would be increased every year by the influence of English emigration; and I have no doubt that the French, when once placed, by the legitimate course of events and the working of natural causes, in a minority, would abandon their vain hopes of nationality. (Hear, hear.)