

Canada was sufficiently numerous to suggest the scheme of uniting the two Canadas under one government, and in 1823 the proposal was made in England. It was, therefore, at that period of trouble and agitation, and rivalry between the Houses, that a plot was entered into in England to annihilate at one blow French-Canadian nationality. The war only postponed the scheme for the union of the two provinces; for the assistance of the French-Canadian people was needed. Peace having been established, it was resolved to carry out the measure, and a bill for the purpose was presented to the Imperial Legislature, unknown to the parties whose fate was being decided, and without their being consulted, for it was known that they were opposed to that act of oppression. Yes, without consulting the people of Lower Canada, it was sought to force upon them a Constitution under which they were to have a smaller representation than Upper Canada; moreover, Lower Canada was to be charged with the debt of the other province, which was a considerable debt, and the language of Lower Canada was to be banished from the Legislature. Happily, the scheme found opponents in the Imperial Parliament, and, despite all the intrigues and efforts of our enemies, the bill was thrown out at the second reading. Then, as at the present day, those who aimed at our destruction were loud in favor of passing the bill, at any price, before the people had an opportunity of protesting. At the present moment, those who desire to force us into Confederation, in the face of the petitions against the scheme, tell us that we must accept the new Constitution before the people are made aware of its monstrous details. "I beg of you to pass this bill at once," said Mr. WILMOTT; "if you wait until next year you will receive so many petitions protesting against the measure, that it will be very difficult to adopt it, however useful it may be to those who oppose it through ignorance or through prejudice; moreover, it is essential to the removal of the difficulties existing between the Executive and the Assembly." When the news of those unjust, but happily abortive, attempts reached Canada, the greatest agitation was produced, and the whole Canadian people felt indignant at such proceedings. Several meetings were held at Montreal and Quebec to protest against the bill, and petitions to the English Government were signed by 60,000 persons. At that period, as in this instance, the union was to be carried without consulting the people, and the Imperial Parliament submitted to the

Legislature a measure against which 60,000 French-Canadians protested. Mr. SPEAKER, I have no hesitation in asserting it, the scheme of Confederation which it is now attempted to force upon the people is destined to be rejected, not by 60,000 French-Canadian signatures merely, but by 100,000. Yes, our people are waking up, and in this united and general protest we shall not lag behind those who showed us the example of an effective protest whenever it was sought to inflict injustice upon them. We will send to England thousands of signatures to protest against the Constitution we do not desire, and if justice is then refused, well "*fiat justitia ruat cælum*," we shall have employed every constitutional means, and the responsibility for the consequences of that refusal of justice will fall on the heads of those who labor to bring about such a state of things. The Hon. DENIS BENJAMIN VIGER, one of the boldest champions of our rights, said of the bringing forward of the scheme of union in the Imperial Parliament, without consulting the people:—

After fifty years of peace and prosperity, when the generation that witnessed the conquest has passed away; when there remains hardly a living witness of that event among the present generation; when the memory and the impression of it has died out in the breast of French-Canadians; when, in fine, there no longer remains in the Province any but British born subjects, enjoying all their rights in that capacity alone—now it is that a scheme is concocted under which we are to be treated—I will not say as a conquered people, for the public laws of civilized nations no longer permit the vanquished to be robbed of their institutions and laws, any more than of their property—but like a barbarous race to whom the enlightenment and the arts, the principles and the duties of social life, are unknown.

And in truth, Mr. SPEAKER, those words were not too strong to qualify justly the conduct of the Imperial Government at that period. Blood had to be shed at St. Denis and St. Charles, and heads to fall by the axe of the executioner, before justice could be obtained. It was only then, when it was found that the people did not hesitate to sacrifice the lives of their noblest children, in order to secure their political rights and liberties, that we received responsible government as we now enjoy it and as we desire to preserve it. At the opening of the ensuing Session it was expected that the debate on the finances would be resumed; but the Governor having separated, in the estimates, the civil list from the other expenses, the supplies were voted.