

our decision, both to ourselves and our posterity. The measure is so vast in its bearings, the interests affected by it are so considerable, that no one can be surprised at my diffidence and hesitation. This question of Confederation is bound up with the common interests of empires and the general policy of nations, for it is no unimportant matter for the great nations who bear sway among mankind, to know into what hands the Provinces of British North America may fall. We need only look back into the pages of history to learn how greatly nations are moved by the creation of a new people; and on the present occasion, the thousand voices of the press proclaim the interest which the question of Confederation excites both in America and in Europe itself, and how closely the governments observe our proceedings; and this interest which they feel and proclaim is legitimate and natural, for the measure is destined to make us rank among the nations of the earth. More than all, this question particularly concerns England and the United States, and in an equal degree with ourselves. England is interested in seeing these provinces well governed, prosperous, free, contented and happy. She is interested in their having a good government, and that it should be so administered as to be no burthen to her as the Mother Country; that, on the contrary, they should become powerful and in a position to assist her in certain eventualities. On the other hand, the United States must feel a degree of satisfaction in seeing the Provinces of British North America become a powerful nation. They will see it without a feeling allied to jealousy. They must wish us to be strong enough to maintain our neutrality, our good understanding with them, and those friendly relations which should ever subsist between neighboring nations. But if this question is interesting to England and the United States, it is still more so to ourselves—to us, whose destiny is at stake, to us whose position is a lofty one as compared with the ordinary lot of nations; for the faculty is not granted to all nations to choose their own lot in the full leisure of a time of peace, without the taint of a single drop of blood shed—to fix upon a Constitution which will set them at once on the high road of progress, and enable them to take such ground for their career as may seem good in their own eyes. In 1840, when the union of the two Canadas was under consideration, we occupied no such position, for that union was imposed upon us

in our own despite, and we were never consulted on the subject. It will be remembered that for a certain time our very language was proscribed, and our position rendered as unfortunate as it could be made. True, we had an equal number of representatives in this House, but as a people we were manifestly held to be inferior. I grant that the attempt to fix the yoke permanently on our necks proved a failure, but this was no fault of those who imposed the union on us. We have won the position which we now occupy by our own energy and perseverance, assisted by some of the representatives of Upper Canada. At this day things are greatly changed. We are in the midst of a great revolution, but a revolution of which peace is the guiding spirit; we are free to deliberate whether we will change our position, and to dictate the terms on which the change is to be made. We are invited to shape out our future destiny, and we should not be true to ourselves, or to our constituents, if we refused this day to avail ourselves of the resolutions adopted at the Conference of Quebec. The hon. member for Hochelaga (Hon. Mr. DORION), whom I regret not to see in his place—

HON. MR. HOLTON—He will be here in a moment.

HON. SOL. GEN. LANGEVIN—The hon. member for Hochelaga told us the other day that the plan of a Confederation was adopted and moved by the present Administration for the mere purpose of stifling the cry of representation by population. Well, and if it really were so, where does the hon. member find the harm in it? Is it not most important that we should stop that cry for representation based on population, in our present condition? Representation by population would have left us, Lower Canadians, in an inferior position relatively to that of Upper Canada—would have conferred on the latter the privilege of legislating for us, not only in general, but in local matters. The hon. member for Hochelaga ought to have been the last to reproach the present Government with having, by this measure of Confederation, stopped the cry for representation based on population. In 1854, the hon. member admitted, as he himself acknowledges, that representation based on population was just in principle, and the consequence of that admission was fatal. The consequence was that the hon. member was compelled to keep in the same track until the formation of the BROWN-DORION Administration in