

Constitution, without liberty on our part to amend it, the danger will be increased rather than diminished. So far, Lower Canada has sufficiently showed, by the voice of her leaders, that she is prepared to make all possible concessions; but after that, would it be prudent to render her dissatisfied by denying us the right of modifying the proposed plan in some degree. We have been obliged, in order to satisfy the public mind, to allege, and truly, that the Ministry had been compelled to make some concessions to the provinces for the general satisfaction; but now that the contracting parties to the plan of Confederation retreat from their engagements, after having imposed on us compromises and exacted concessions, why should we, at a critical time like the present, proceed to submit our position to the Imperial Parliament, exactly as if the Provinces had been true to their pledges? I am of opinion, Mr. SPEAKER, that this is asking too much of us, and that as the Lower provinces are evidently no longer in the mind to be united with us, we French-Canadians should be greatly in the wrong if we presented our case with the same conditions as we were led to accept, in compliance with the requirements of the sister colonies. I think that both Upper and Lower Canada are now entitled to present themselves much more favorably before the Imperial Parliament, and that they may say—"These are concessions which we had made, it is true, for the sake of the common good; but the Maritime Provinces have now gone back from their engagements, and their present desire is either to remain independent or to enter the American Republic! We have done our duty, and we are still ready to remain faithful to our engagements, which we had entered into with the contracting parties; but as they gave us up, and the concessions which we made are not now held by them to be sufficient, we are come to plead our own cause before you, and to tell you that the interests of Lower Canada now require better guarantees than we had been obliged to accept from the Maritime Provinces, for the sake of coming to an amicable conclusion. We now come to request that England will be more favourable to us, and relieve us from our difficulties by making constitutional changes less disadvantageous to us." In such a case, I believe that the Imperial Government would not venture to impose a Constitution on us without our consent, but would be favourable to our wishes. That the French-Canadians are all loyal subjects of Her Britannic Majesty,

no one will doubt; but it would be an act of folly on the part of English statesmen to impose on them a Constitution which they would reject or very strongly resist. I say this out of a feeling of loyalty, for I know that there are statesmen in England who understand that the loyalty of Upper and Lower Canadians most depend on their being satisfied with their new Constitution. How would it benefit England to give us a Constitution which might suit her, as tending to perpetuate her rule in Lower Canada, but which would not be at the same time satisfactory to the majority in both Upper and Lower Canada? A spirit of discontent would be soon aroused which would cool our zeal in defending our country. This is a self-evident truth, intelligible to all the world. I trust, therefore, Mr. SPEAKER, that if the measure of Confederation is passed, it will not be forced upon us, without the present House having an opportunity of weighing its merits, and amending it. I am prepared, I confess, to go as far as any man, and to make the greatest concessions, to extricate the country from its difficulties, and come to a good understanding, that we may make sure of a Confederation with the immense advantages which it might bring with it; but I am bound to confess, when I am told, in presence of the events which have just passed, that we must submit to the conditions imposed on us by the contracting parties, who have, so soon after making it, refused to ratify it—I say that I think it wrong to tie down Lower Canada absolutely to the first conditions. I wish the extreme position which the Government have taken up in the face of the country may be productive of the greatest amount of good to it; but, for my part, Mr. SPEAKER, I cannot help thinking and confessing that I have very strong fears on that subject. It seems to me that in the present circumstances, the Government ought to have granted the fullest opportunity, both to Upper and to Lower Canada, to make such suggestions as they might think fit, and not to insist on the adoption of the scheme in its present form. By such a proceeding they would have afforded members who have amendments to move a fair and constitutional way of setting themselves right in the opinion of their fellow-countrymen, by recording them at least on the *Journals* of the House. The position in which we are placed is tantamount in its effects to the cry of "all or nothing." But, Mr. SPEAKER, I have always been averse to such a system; and if we look back to our past