

Mr. A. MACKENZIE—

He had looked at it in this way. The time had been when the people of Upper Canada imagined that the Lower Canadians were afraid to grant representation by population lest western reformers should interfere with their religious institutions. He was fully satisfied that that idea was entirely erroneous—that the French people never had the slightest fear of the kind, because they knew it would be political suicide, it would be absolute ruin to any political party having the administration of affairs in their hands, to perpetrate injustice on any section of the people, to whatever church they belonged. (Cheers.) There was one element, however, which always entered largely into the discussion of all our national questions, and that was that the French people were a people entirely different from ourselves in origin, and largely in feeling. We all had a certain pride in our native country, and gloried in the deeds of our ancestors. The French people had that feeling quite as strongly as any of us; this reason, and also because they were a conquered people, they felt it necessary to maintain a strong national spirit, and to resist all attempts to procure justice by the people of the west, lest that national existence should be broken down. He (Mr. MACKENZIE) felt for one that mere representation by population, under such circumstances, would perhaps scarcely meet the expectations formed of it, because although Upper Canada would have seventeen more members than Lower Canada, it would be an easy thing for the fifty or fifty-five members representing French constituencies to unite with a minority from Upper Canada, and thus secure an Administration subservient to their views.

These were the sentiments that I uttered at that meeting, and the sentiments to which I am prepared now to give utterance again. (Hear, hear.) I believe that that feeling of nationality has been our sole difficulty, in working our present political system. But I do not believe for one moment that it would be possible or perhaps desirable to extinguish that strong feeling of nationality. Break down that feeling and all patriotism will be broken down with it. (Hear, hear.) I do not think it would be fair, or kind, or honorable, to attempt to do so. When Britain conquered the country, she accepted the responsibility of governing a foreign people in accordance with their feelings, so far as consistent with British policy. That feeling of nationality obtains so strongly in all countries, that, where attempts have been made, as in Austria, to break it down, they have signally failed. When such an attempt failed, though made by a despotic government, with a powerful army at its command, how could we expect it to succeed in a free coun-

try. In Austria, at this moment, eighteen different nationalities are represented in the national councils; and, notwithstanding all its military power and *prestige*, Austria has been compelled to accord local parliaments or assemblies to every one of those eighteen nationalities. (Hear, hear.) I have felt, therefore, that it would be utterly impracticable to obtain representation by population so long as the French people believed, as I came to find they did believe, that this concession to us would involve destruction to them as a separate people.

HON. MR. HOLTON—That is what they fear will be the result of the scheme now proposed.

MR. A. MACKENZIE—No; I have yet to learn that they have any such fear. The Attorney General East (Hon. Mr. CARTIER), in his speech, a few evenings ago, adverted to the position taken by the French inhabitants of Lower Canada at the time of the French revolution, and claimed credit for them, because they remained loyal to the British Crown, when all the other North American Colonies threw off the British sway. The honorable gentleman's claim was perfectly just. But I believe that they were actuated by another feeling beyond the feeling of loyalty—that they felt their only safeguard as a distinct people—the only way to preserve their nationality, was to remain attached to Great Britain. Their existence for twenty years as a French colony under British rule, was not perhaps sufficient to give that attachment which they have now to the British Government. But it was perfectly clear to them that, if they entered the American Union, they would be absorbed and lost, just as the French colony of Louisiana has since been. (Hear, hear.) I have been charged, and others with me, who have held the same political views, with deserting our party, because we have ceased to act with the gentlemen from Lower Canada with whom we formerly acted. I think there is no fair ground for such a charge. For what, after all, is party? It is but an association of individuals holding opinions in common on some grounds of public policy, or some measures which they may believe to be necessary for the conduct of the government of the country to which they belong. Looking at the matter in that light, there is no part of our party politics in the west, that we have insisted upon so strongly as that which concerns the representation of the people in Parliament.