

seems to conspire to this union. The imminence of war with the United States, the certainty of the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty, the danger of non-intercourse, the opportunity of the Charlottetown Convention, and the consequent necessity of the Intercolonial Railway—all point to this Confederation. But the expense is the bugbear of the opponents of this scheme. If the great social and political interests of the country are to be served, if we are to have laid broad and deep in the hearts of the people the foundations of a great nationality, as my honorable friend from Wellington has expressed it, the financial part of the scheme is but a secondary consideration. To-day, the balance of advantage may be against us; to-morrow, it may be in our favor. Who can say, when the railway shall be established, and when by the union we shall have incited new enterprises and energies, and developed the whole resources of the eastern provinces, with whom the financial balance may rest? I cannot close my remarks better than by saying, that had a union of all these provinces existed in fact as it has existed in the minds of statesmen since the commencement of the present century, the man who, in the face of our present critical position, with civil war raging in our vicinity, and even national war threatening ourselves, should now propose to dissolve that union and scatter us again into disjointed fragments, would be looked upon as an enemy to his Queen and a traitor to his country. (Cheers.)

HON. MR. OLIVIER—Honorable gentlemen, a French journal in Montreal, in reporting the proceedings of a meeting recently held at Berthier, to consider the proposed project of the Confederation of Canada and the Lower Provinces, and to which meeting, in the capacity of representative of the division in which the county is situated, I was invited, stated that I had expressed myself against that project, and I therefore take this, the first opportunity, of declaring that the journal in question was in error, and that I did not so express myself. I did, however, say at that meeting, that there were provisions in the project upon which I could not look with a favorable eye, but that I could not then pronounce an opinion, but would wait until I came to Parliament, when I expected the details would be placed before the members fully and in good faith. I must, however, say, honorable gentlemen, that in this I have been much disappointed, for until now, the information so much desired and asked for has

not been supplied, and the House is left in the dark in respect of several important matters upon which it is asked to decide. For instance, it was stated in the resolutions, that means would be taken to effectually protect the minorities and preserve to them the rights they now possess, but we were not informed as to what those rights were, or as to the means to be used for preserving them untouched and unimpaired. If we had known what these means would be, we would have come prepared to assent to, or to dissent from them, in an intelligent manner, and to express our opinions as we ought to do, but this information was not vouchsafed. I understand that a bill, to assure to the Protestants of Lower Canada the uninterrupted possession and enjoyment of their rights, is to be brought down and passed before the scheme of Federation itself is fully adopted and sanctioned; but I have not heard that any similar measure is to be passed in favor of the Roman Catholics of Upper Canada. I have no objection, whatever, to grant to the Protestants of Lower Canada, for all future time, the rights they now enjoy, or any other rights and guarantees which may be deemed reasonable and equitable, but I cannot vote to adopt the resolutions until I am informed whether the Roman Catholics of the west are to be dealt with in the same manner. By refusing us information on this important subject, the Government has placed us in a false position, from which, I think, it is their duty to extricate us. I shall not now address myself to the inquiry of whether the Confederation scheme be really desirable or not, but cannot help saying that the long-standing difference between the two sections of the province might have been arranged, if during the last difficulty between the respective parties the leading men on either side had been willing to sink their personal differences and make mutual concessions. But as it is of no use now to refer to that subject, I will not argue the matter further. I maintain again, however, that the House has a right to expect the Government will give us all the information in respect of the details of the Confederation scheme as may be necessary to understand thoroughly all its provisions. My opinion is, that as much power as possible should have been entrusted to the local governments, and as little as is consistent with the functions it will have to discharge to the Central Government, and my reason for entertaining this opinion is, that the Supreme Government, with its power of purse and its control of the armies, will always