

shall find that our public men were always attached to the Crown of England up to the time when they were compelled by the arbitrary and unjust conduct of the Imperial Government to have recourse to arms to obtain respect for our political rights and our liberties; and it was thus in 1837 that we gained responsible government. (Hear, hear.) But in order to hold up to view the spirit of aggression and encroachment which has always characterised the English population in America, I shall give an historical sketch of the struggles through which we had to pass, in the course of a century, to attain at last our present Constitution, which it is my wish to preserve, but which our Ministers wish to destroy in order to substitute for it the scheme of Confederation. This historical sketch will demonstrate to us that we owe no gratitude to England for those political reforms which were obtained for us only through the unyielding patriotism of our great men, who, with intelligence, energy and perseverance, valiantly strove for the constant defence of our rights. We shall also see that, if they obtained the system of government and the political liberty for which they struggled, it was because we had for our neighbors the states of the American Union, and that side by side with the evil was its remedy. We shall see that whenever England stood in need of us to defend her power, she made concessions to us; but that when the danger was once over, colonial fanaticism always attempted to withdraw those concessions and to destroy the influence and the liberties of the French race. Each page of the parliamentary history of our country offers a fresh proof of this. But we then had men who knew how to struggle for a noble cause, and who did not shrink from the danger which that struggle entailed. I hope, Mr. SPEAKER, that we have still some of those men without fear and without reproach in Lower Canada; I hope the present Ministry are sincere at the moment when they are giving up the guarantees of the existing Constitution. If they can arrive at a happy conclusion with their scheme of Confederation, I shall be the first to congratulate them, and posterity will thank them for having had the hardihood to propose so vast a scheme. But I must say that there are men as intelligent and as devoted to the dearest interests of our country as the hon. gentlemen who are sitting on the Ministerial benches, who are

convinced that this scheme, far from being a remedy for existing difficulties, is but a new engine prepared by our natural adversaries more easily to destroy the influence of the French race in America, an influence for the preservation of which we have had to fight step by step ever since the commencement of English domination in Canada. (Hear, hear.) The first political struggle between the French and the English elements in the country occurred only a few years after the treaty of capitulation had been signed. The general then commanding in Canada established a system of military government. There may have been ground for such a system after so long and bloody a war as that which was just over, and which had left behind it so much legitimate animosity in the hearts of the conqueror and the conquered. However, the treaty of capitulation declared that the Canadians should be "subjects of the king," and as such they were entitled to representative government. The faith of treaty was therefore violated from the commencement of the English domination in Canada, and as I shall have the honor of shewing, this was but the first link in the long chain of arbitrary acts to which we have been subjected since that period. The following, Mr. SPEAKER, is the first aggressive act that I shall cite in support of my statement:—

In 1764 General MURRAY, in accordance with his instructions, formed a new council, uniting the executive, legislative and judicial power, and composed of the lieutenant-governors of Montreal and Three Rivers, the chief justice, the inspector of customs, and eight influential persons. But one obscure man of the country was taken to make up the number.

This was the first act that had to be complained of.—

It was proposed to take possession of the bishopric of Quebec, together with the property attached to it, and to confer it on the Bishop of London, and to grant to the Catholics only limited toleration, to exact from them the oath of allegiance, and to declare them incapable, as Catholics, of holding any public office. Justice was administered by men ignorant of the laws of the country, and in a language with which the Canadians were unacquainted.

It is unnecessary to make any lengthened comments on the entirely unjust manner in which the Canadians were thus treated, and on the flagrant violations of the conditions of the treaty of capitulation of Montreal.