

be given to words is that given to them by the law of the country, and I am therefore justified, when explaining the resolutions before us, in holding to the very letter of their resolutions, and it needs no effort of the imagination to discover the intention of those who prepared them. The provincial statute 22 Victoria, chap. 29, relative to the interpretation of the statutes, says:—"Whenever by any act it is provided that a thing shall be done, the obligation to do it is to be inferred; but when it is said that a thing may be done, the power of doing it is permissive." In the resolutions submitted us, the word used in the English version is "may," which is translated into French by the word "*pourront*," and it is said that the English and French languages may be used simultaneously in the proceedings of the Federal Parliament as well as in the Legislature of Lower Canada, and also in the Federal courts and the courts of Lower Canada. It is easy to see, then, that the use of the French language is rendered extremely precarious, and that the majority may proscribe it in our *Votes and Proceedings*, and in our Legislature. The Lower Canada members who have always supported the Ministry ought to urge them to insert a clause in the resolutions declaring that the French language shall be on the same footing as the English language; the guarantee afforded us by the resolutions, as they now stand, amounts to nothing. I am not the first to point out the danger to our institutions and our laws; the *Canadien* of this city has enumerated them over and over again, and the honorable member for Montmorency himself, who quite recently admitted in this House that he was the editor in chief of the *Journal de Québec*, wrote as follows in that paper on the 18th January, 1865. After having spoken of the past conduct of the Upper Canadians, and more particularly of the Honorable President of the Council (Hon. Mr. BROWN), he says:—

For Lower Canada there are other questions still besides the question of money: there are the religious, social, and national questions. Here it is that the greatest difficulties exist in the way of the success of the scheme, for a few slight changes in the letter of the scheme—changes which will in no way affect the interests of the other provinces—will cause the project to be accepted by the immense majority of the population of the country. We do not hesitate to say that it is astounding that the Conference should have approximated so closely to equity, after a few days only of work, and in the midst of innumerable obstacles.

It seems to me, Mr. SPEAKER, that if the honorable member for Montmorency was right in telling the Ministry that our nationality and our institutions were in danger, and that changes were required, we French-Canadian members are bound to see that the resolutions submitted to us afford sufficient protection to those institutions, and that the resolutions are not written in such a way as to be susceptible of two interpretations. How has the discussion of the scheme of Confederation been conducted in Lower Canada? In this way: in the first place, all the Ministerial journals begged and prayed the people not to condemn the scheme before being made acquainted with it; they proclaimed stoutly that the Government must be allowed to elaborate its measures in peace, and then, when the scheme was made public, the same journals declared that certainly the scheme must be amended in certain particulars before being adopted by the country, and that they would be the first to call for these changes, which, moreover, could be obtained without difficulty from the Administration; if not, they would oppose the scheme as dangerous to Lower Canada. Even the *Mercury* made that statement. It was also said: "The Government will not make a Ministerial question of the adoption of the scheme as it is; the project may be discussed, and if it is found to involve anything dangerous for our religious and national institutions, that danger can be obviated by amending the resolutions." More than that, at the opening of the discussion of the scheme, the Hon. Attorney General for Upper Canada himself declared in this House that members might propose amendments, and that the House would dispose of them. Now what have we seen since? We have seen the same Hon. Minister declare that the scheme must be accepted as it was, and that the Government would not tolerate any amendment. Is such conduct calculated to inspire confidence in the scheme, and in the Administration who bring it forward? I appeal to honorable members from Lower Canada, and I ask them if they are prepared to ratify by their verdict the unjustifiable course adopted by the Government, and whether it is not their duty to insist on the Government affording us better security for our religious and national institutions? (Hear. hear.) I trust that the Lower Canada members will not shirk their duty, and that they will insist on the Government declaring, in their resolutions, that all these things we hold so dear shall be pro-