

as it became inferior in any respect to the House of Commons, it would no longer be in a position to counteract its influence and would consequently fail in the task of maintaining the rights of the Provinces of lesser population.

It is, therefore, quite natural that Quebec should attend with the greatest care, not only to the maintenance of the Upper House, but equally to the entire preservation of its prestige, its power and its efficiency, and this for four distinct reasons.

1. The first is one of constitutional rights. Proud of living under the British Constitution, what we want is not a mock constitution or the shadow of a British Constitution, we must have the British Constitution in all its excellency. *The essence of that Constitution, the primordial principle on which it is based, is the perfect equality of powers, or the perfect equilibrium between the Monarchical, Aristocratic and Democratical forces.*

But we perceive, to our regret, that every day the Senate is losing a portion of its influence, its prestige, its authority, in short, its power, whilst the House of Commons assumes the power thus lost by the Senate. In this country, even more than in England, the character of British institutions is being more and more altered and defaced, to such an extent, that we can repeat with some truth Lord Beaconsfield's saying relative to England:—"That democratical tendencies are such that the popular branch of Parliament is superseding the two others to such an extent that the essential character of the British Constitution is disappearing."

In Canada, the power and influence is fast disappearing of the Senate, which, of the three branches, is chiefly our safe-guard, and to whose strength were entrusted our dearest interests.

At the origin of Confederation the Senate had, together with the House of Commons, a considerable proportion of administrative influence. At that time so many as five Ministers were chosen from the Senate. And if we consider in what proportion, in England, the different Ministers, even liberal, recruited their members from the House of Lords, it will be seen that our Senate there furnished nothing but its fair quantity. And let it be remembered that my pretension cannot be repudiated on the plea that it is too anti-democratical, for it perfectly agrees even with the views of the very founders of the famous United States Republic—of John Adams, amongst others—who, although devoted adherents to the republican system, thought it best to secure their young republic against the extreme tendencies of democracy—by recommending to adopt that perfect balance of powers which is the characteristic of the British Constitution.

The second reason is one of right of nations (*Droit des gens*). The federal pact made by Provinces, each of which preserves in a large degree its peculiar autonomy, partakes to a certain extent of the nature of a treaty between independent nations.

Thus, we accepted Confederation on the express condition that our Senate would establish a perfect equilibrium between Ontario, Quebec and the group of Maritime Provinces; on that condition and on that condition only we consented to form part of the Confederacy. England most scrupulously respected the fact in question. Not a single change has been made to the dispositions adopted by the conference held in Quebec. The Imperial Parliament recognized in it the character of a solemn treaty between nations. The colossal power of the Metropolis, the Crown, and the British Parliament bowed religiously in the name of sworn faith, to the solemn compact between the contracting parties.

The third reason is one of Provincial interest. Ontario on the one side, Quebec on the other, and the group of Maritime Provinces as third party to the treaty, had stipulated absolute equality between themselves in the Senate. There, perfect equilibrium was to exist between the three groups.

Well! this equilibrium has long since been broken! So soon as Ontario alone had three Ministers chosen in the Senate, whilst the other groups had not the slightest share in the Ministerial patronage, it may be said that from that moment, Ontario's influence was doubled in the Upper House. There is no need of insisting on this point, it being self-evident that on every important question. Ontario's 24 members, having amongst them three Ministers and the full weight of administrative influence, the full prestige and force given by the distribution of patronage of the highest situations, &c., &c., in a country where unfortunately situation-hunting plays such a prominent part, it is evident I say that Ontario's 24 members are at least twice as strong as 24 members of Quebec, deprived of every advantage of the same nature. Ontario already possessing in the Commons a preponderating influence, in consequence of a deputation superior in number by one-third, also enjoys now in the Senate an equally preponderating influence, double at least that of Quebec. Once again, what has therefore become of the proposed equilibrium? Where is that perfect equality promised which was by a solemn and sacred compact?

The fourth reason is one of nationality. One of the parties to that federal compact was not only a Province, but a distinct nationality, having to protect one and all its national rights—its language, its religion, its customs, its laws and national autonomy. It was perfectly agreed that Confederation, far from attempting to destroy these rights, would recognize them all, respect them all, protect them all! For that very reason, notwithstanding the majority in number, in spite of the fact that the English language was spoken by the majority of Provinces as by the majority of the population, the French language was placed on a perfectly equal footing with the English language in the Confederacy. Both were to be similarly the official languages of Canada. French being an official language, not only on the Throne,