

# OPENING OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

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## SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HON. HONORÉ MERCIER,

Premier of the Province of Quebec,

AT THE

*Convention of the Nationalists of the District of Quebec, held at  
Tara Hall, on the 15th May, 1890.*

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GENTLEMEN,—I have taken the liberty, on the advice of the principal leaders of our party in Quebec, to call you together in order to lay the foundations of a strong and vigorous electoral organization for the campaign which is about to open.

As you are aware, the Legislature is dissolved ; nominations are fixed for the 10th and polling for the 17th June next.

We have, therefore, only a month to organize the victory which is not doubtful to any mind, if I am to place any reliance on the news reaching me from all parts.

I therefore respectfully beg of you to immediately form a grand central committee which will have the general management of the contest in the whole of the Quebec division, that is to say, of all the counties to the east of and including Three Rivers and Arthabaska. This general committee will choose an executive committee composed only of certain members, of a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and two other persons who will be charged with the carrying out of the decisions of the central committee. You will, doubtless, make it your duty to name as members of this last committee persons devoted, active, experienced, and at the disposal of the party at all times.

### MEANING OF THE STRUGGLE.

But before letting you proceed to the election of members of these two committees, allow me to make a few remarks, appropriate to the occasion and as brief as possible.

The struggle which is about to open is of the highest importance to the Province of Quebec ; its autonomy and consequently its dearest interests are at stake. Are the Provinces to remain sovereign as regards their legitimate attributes, or are they to become the slaves of the Federal power ? This is the chief question which the electorate are called upon to decide during the elections about to begin.

The question is exceedingly grave, for upon its solution depends necessarily the life or death of the Confederation. In point of fact, if the Provinces cease to be their own masters, and become the slaves of the Federal power, the ruin of the Confederation will necessarily and, within a short time, follow. If, on the contrary, the autonomy of the Province is maintained in all its integrity, the Federal union will be more strongly maintained than ever under one form or other.