

What would happen if we were separated? I do not wish to give the impression that the hon. member for Lotbinière meant to put the question. But since we are on that ground, it is well that everybody should state his thought.

What position would we be in, shut in without access to the sea during all the winter months? How could we defend our immense frontier? What part of the National Debt would we have to assume? What would be the customs duties of the provinces with which we now trade freely? Finally in what position would our people outside of Quebec be?

It is true that our province has, too often, been the butt of unjust attacks, and that insulting words have not been economised on our account. But would all that be enough to justify us in demanding the breaking of a pact, a pact that has given us the results which I summarized for you a few moments since?

If we glance towards the neighboring republic we will find there a great lesson in union, and an encouraging example. The American Confederation has existed for eighty years. The States were vying with each other in work, enthusiasm and ambition to aggrandize the common country, when there arose the question of freeing the negroes. And this almost ruined that great republic. The quarrel, begun in the newspapers and on public platforms, carried on bitterly in Congress, led the adversaries on to the battlefield. That was the Civil War, that war of secession which cost our neighbors the lives of 500,000 men, almost a million wounded, and two billions of dollars.

And what came about after so much devastation, so great misery, such expenditure of blood? Reconciliation, fruitful union that has developed, enriched, and aggrandized in the phenomenal manner you know of, the American Republic, and given her that power, thanks to which she is going, together with the Allies, to preserve to the human race right, justice and liberty. (Long applause.)

We complain of insults and appeals to prejudice but our fathers endured the same treatment under all the regimes, that of 1760, that of 1764, in 1774, in 1791, still more in 1840, and especially in the last sixty years we have been constantly, constantly subjected to insult by politicians to gratify the appetite for power and the lust for patronage.