

Upper Canada Reform party in the Assembly, by nearly the whole of the Upper Canada Conservative party, and by a large majority of the representatives of Lower Canada. (Cheers.) The position I occupy to-day is, I think, a full and satisfactory answer to the charges of impracticability, of factiousness, of demagoguism, and so forth, that have so often and so freely been hurled against me. (Cheers.) I wish not to utter a word to-day calculated in the least degree to revive old feuds. (Hear, hear.) We have all agreed to act heartily together for the remedy of a great national wrong, from which all of us equally suffer, and the sooner we completely banish the past and fasten our thoughts upon the future the more prompt and complete will be the success of our joint efforts. But I am persuaded it will not be thought out of place if once and forever I state the grievances of which we Upper Canadians have complained, the persistent efforts we have made to obtain redress, and the various remedies suggested for adoption. Gentlemen, the primary cause of all our troubles is to be found in the provisions of the Imperial Union Act of 1840. Previous to the passing of that Act Upper Canada and Lower Canada were separate provinces, with separate Legislatures and separate Executive Governments. The Union Act brought them together under one Legislature and Government, but unfortunately it maintained the line of demarcation between the two sections, and secured to each forty-two representatives in the popular branch—afterwards increased to sixty-five. When this Act went into force, Lower Canada had 175,000 people more than Upper Canada, but from the large immigration into Upper Canada the Western Province soon outstripped the Eastern. In 1847 Upper Canada passed in advance of the Lower Province; in 1852 the census returns showed her to have 61,000 souls more than Lower Canada; in January, 1861, the census returns showed her to have, 284,525 souls more than Lower Canada; and now, by the official calculations of the Statistical Board, the excess of Upper Canada population exceeds 400,000 souls. Now, unfortunately, the Union Act provided no remedy for this state of things. Notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers, those living on the eastern side of the line drawn in 1792 have the same number of representatives as those living on the western side of it. True, the Canadian Parliament has full power to change the system of representation, but the Lower Canadians have clung tenaciously to their advantage, and the political power they have wielded has heretofore enabled them to resist all attempts at reform. The general injustice has become utterly unendurable in the case of the great western constituencies, that were almost uninhabited at the time of the Union, but have now been filled up by the tide of immigration. The counties of Huron and Bruce have a population of 79,453, and send only one member to Parliament—but there are ten members sitting for ten constituencies whose aggregate population is only 81,096! True, there are several towns among these ten constituencies—but leaving the towns out of the question, there are actually seven members sitting for seven Lower Canada counties whose aggregate population is but 76,650, while Mr. Dickson's constituents alone number 79,453! These seven counties are, Laval, Compton, Montmerenci, St. Maurice, Jacques Cartier, Soulanges, and Stanstead. Huron and Perth have a population of 117,586, but send only two representatives to Parliament; while there are ten Lower Canada counties, with an aggregate population of 117,964, that send no fewer than ten representatives! Huron, Perth and Grey have a population of 155,286 souls, and send but three representatives, while there are thirteen counties in Lower Canada with an aggregate population of 157,085, that send no fewer than thirteen representatives! These thirteen