

launched into eternity? Because no appeals that they made would be listened to, although the petition was signed by all classes and creeds in the community, with the exception of the Reform member of the Legislature of that county. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Speaker, in this matter what was the position in which I found myself placed? I have read here, from the annals of the Propagation of the Faith, what had been the career of the unfortunate man whose fate we are discussing. I was asked to do what? To stand up for him in the name of the French-Canadian race—to stand up for him and do what? To roll in the gutter, and to disgrace and degrade, and denounce as, traitors, the three French-Canadian gentlemen in the Ministry who have stood by the French-Canadian people for years and years. (Loud cheers.) Was I doing more honor to the French-Canadian people by believing in the integrity of the hon. Minister of Public Works in this house, the chosen friend of the late lamented Sir George E. Cartier, his chosen lieutenant, his chosen successor in this house and country, who had labored for thirty years and never once betrayed the interests that were confided to him by his people? Was I to sacrifice him? Was I to degrade and disgrace him for the sake of Louis Riel, because deluded people clamoured against him and called him a traitor? (Cheers.) Was I to see my hon. friend the Minister of Militia treated in the same manner, whom I have known, respected and admired for his pluck, and for the manner in which he stood up for his countrymen upon all occasions? Was I to sacrifice that hon. gentleman for the sake of the clamor about Louis Riel? (Cheers.) Was I doing more honor and more credit to the French-Canadian people by believing that these men were instigated by honest, and high and pure motives, than by espousing the cause of the wretched man, Louis Riel? Was I, sir, to sacrifice the friend of my youth, the man with whom I have grown up side by side, whom I have seen raised to the highest position in his own province, the idol of the French-Canadian people for his noble, generous qualities and especially his brilliant eloquence—was I to sacrifice my hon. friend Mr. Chapleau, the secretary of state?

Was I doing more honor to the French-Canadian people by believing that these three hon. gentlemen remained true to their people, and was I to be justified in preferring Louis Riel to them? And, sir, more than all that, I was asked to sacrifice the right hon. the leader of this Government, and to believe that he was capable—he and his colleagues—for the satisfaction of any organization in this country whatever, of steeping their hands in the blood of a fellow-creature? And I was asked, sir, to sacrifice the man in this Government who belongs to my own race and creed—all for the sake of Louis Riel. I was asked to sacrifice the hon. Minister of Inland Revenue, the man who had carried the Irish resolutions in this House, which had caused joy and gladness to my fellow-countrymen on the other side of the Atlantic. (Great cheering.) I was asked to sacrifice him. I was asked to sacrifice everything that is near and dear to me! Could I do it? Could I do it in face of my experience in the past? Could I do it after what I knew had transpired in the Northwest? In the face of the history of this unfortunate rebellion, and all for the sake of a man whose character has been described by the missionaries whose evidence I have quoted? No, sir, I could not do it. I felt that I should be unworthy of the position I hold, if, standing here, speaking in behalf of the people I have the honor to represent, I allowed myself, under those circumstances, to be carried away by this irrational and mischievous agitation. I acted, sir, knowing and feeling fully how painful my duty was; but in performing that duty, I have acted as a man who feels the responsibility of his position, as a man who loves the race who has taken this unfortunate man for a time to their hearts, but who will find out their mistake before very long, and I am convinced, sir, that the future will justify my conduct and the verdict of my constituents will be that I have acted as a man of honor, as a man of conscience, as a man who loves his country dearly, and who hopes to see that country great and glorious in the future. Mr. Curran resumed his seat amidst prolonged cheering.