

satisfactory to Upper Canada, and acceptable to the Lower Canadians. They ask, what do you want? Our reply is—Representation by Population—the sweeping away of the absurd line of demarcation between Upper and Lower Canada, and placing all Canadians on the same level. They answer—"We cannot grant you that." "No! why not?" "Because, if we grant you that, you will come down with your majority, and destroy our language, our religion, our laws, everything which we peculiarly cherish." "No," we say, "we have no desire that you should not be at full liberty to manage your local affairs as you like. All we want is to have a like control over our own local affairs, and also that just influence in matters of common concern to both to which our numbers entitle us." Well, a report was drawn up in accordance with this, in favour of the federal principle. (Hear, hear.) The details, of course, were not settled, but it was a very great gain to get Mr. Cartier, Mr. Turcotte, Mr. Chapais, and other leading French Canadians, to sign a report in favour of applying the Federal principle to Canada, involving as it did, that, in the popular branch of the Federal Legislature, the representation should be based on population. (Cheers.) Well, gentlemen, on the very same day that that report was presented to the House, the Taché-Macdonald Government was defeated by a majority of two. The question they had then to consider was what course they should adopt—whether they should resign, re-construct, or go to the country. Their predecessors but a few weeks before had tried to form a Coalition, but had not succeeded. They themselves had made the same attempt, and failed. And as for appealing to the country, a general election had taken place only last fall, and there was little hope that another appeal would make much difference in the position of affairs. Under all the circumstances, however, they deemed it best to advise a dissolution, and they so advised His Excellency. I am bound to say that the Governor-General, as he has always done from the first day he entered the province, acted in the emergency with a wisdom and an earnest desire to promote the welfare of Canada, for which he is entitled to our warmest gratitude. (Cheers.) So far as I understand the position taken by His Excellency, it was this:—"If you insist on a dissolution, I will grant it to you—but remember how serious a responsibility you take upon you. You will have had three elections in three years; you had four Administrations condemned in that time; and it is for you seriously to consider what grounds there are for supposing that another election will change the situation." I am satisfied there was not a man on either side of the House who believed that a general election would have materially altered the state of matters. But suppose that either party had obtained a gain of four or five seats, and more was impossible; still there would have been a large Upper Canada majority arrayed in hostile feud against a large Lower Canada majority, and we would have had, with aggravations, a repetition of all the old difficulties. Clearly a very grave dilemma had arisen. Instantly, I determined to make use of that dilemma. I went at once to several supporters of the Government and strongly urged upon them that the existing crisis should be improved for the settlement of our whole sectional troubles; and I assured them that I, for one, was prepared to co-operate with the present, or any other Administration that would deal with this question, promptly and firmly, with a view to its final settlement. The gentlemen to whom I spoke, communicated to the members of the Government the purport of what I had stated, and the Government resolved to approach me on the subject. Accordingly, a meeting was arranged, and Messrs. Macdonald and Galt called on me at my quarters. I stated at the start that, in