

strong views as a party man but they have no place in this discussion. I might cross the house to-morrow—if I found my enemies adopting those views, and if my friends should persist in opposing them. There is a grave responsibility resting upon our public men. The country is adrift and the public mind is disquieted. Everybody believes, the finality is not reached and asks, Whither are we drifting? Some suspect that the administration hold peculiar views—but they neither venture to deny nor proclaim them. When I had the honour first to express these opinions on the floor of Parliament, ministers treated me to some personal abuse, but upon the main question they were cautious and silent. There was a profound impression through the house,—but they ventured upon no word of disavowal. Their opinions were shadowed in mystery and they had not the courage to proclaim them. Afterwards when this strange phase of the debate had provoked some comment from the press, Sir George Cartier did indulge in a gentle dissent from my conclusions. No body denies that a change must come; and there remains only the question of time and fitness and preparation. I repeat that public opinion is adrift; and the policy of the administration of the day should be openly avowed and vindicated. If they are opposed to these views, they ought to set their faces boldly and publicly against them. If the time has not arrived, and if they want delay and opportunity to prepare for it, let them openly declare their views and shape their legislation to maintain them. The public could afford to wait, if this dangerous uncertainty were dispelled, and if there were a fixed idea in the popular mind of a definite and desirable future. But grave dangers lurk behind the delays, the doubts and the insecurities of the hour. The truth must be told that we are fast losing our hold upon the loyalty and confidence of our people. Discontent and non-confidence stalk openly among them; and the enemies of our future are encouraged to flaunt

their evil prophecies before our very doors. A national policy, pronounced and progressive, would attract the ear and excite the confidence of the public. They would listen to your appeal, if you supplied them with motives and invoked their sympathies, inspired them with national hopes and aspirations—and their interest in a future they could be proud of, would be like a sheet anchor, to hold them fast to the Dominion. And now gentlemen, I have fulfilled the duty which, I thought, was incumbent upon me, of addressing you some observations, on this absorbing topic of the hour. I have counted the cost and I know the penalty. You have not misunderstood,—but my enemies, as is their custom, will misrepresent and malign me. I shall be neither intimidated nor disheartened. If my views prevail, some of them will join me, before the battle is over. If they are rejected, I have still performed my duty. Sometimes it requires boldness to speak the truth, but there is no power to stifle free discussion in this country. You and I have a right to our opinions, and the right to discuss them. The statesmen of England have set us the example, in the very citadel of the empire. There is no political disability here,—for the councils of the nation are presided over to day, by men,—some of whom lately sought to subvert the government,—and others to promote its immediate annexation. They are loyal citizens now, and so are we. Time changes conditions and works marvels, and time will accomplish the great destiny of this country,—and let us hope, in a manner most conducive to the happiness of its people. In such a case, though my theories should be exploded, my hopes would be fulfilled. Let us hope, too, whatever betides,—in this greater crisis of our history,—for an era of advancing intelligence—of brotherhood and toleration among us. And let us prayerfully commend our country, its future, its people, to the gracious protection and guidance of the great Father of Nations.