

ing their true happiness and prosperity in the end, and that to weaken or destroy it by the withdrawal of any single province would mean the destruction of British interests on the continent and the annexation of Canada eventually to the United States. Then, leaving that branch of the subject, if we look at the distinct national elements that exist throughout Canada, we have further evidence of the difficulties with which a government has to contend in striving to secure the unity and security of this widely extended confederation. When the Canadian provinces were united, in 1840, the French Canadians were restive, and uncertain of their future. The Act of Union was considered by many of them as an attempt to make them subservient to British influences.* The elimination of their language from legislative records was to them a great grievance, because it was, in their opinion, clear evidence of the spirit which lay at the basis of the Union. As a matter of fact, however, the Union Act was a measure which from the very outset gave Lower Canada a political superiority in the government of the whole country. The representation of the two provinces was equal in the Assembly, but the greater unity that distinguished the French Canadians in all matters that might affect their political power or their provincial interests, naturally enabled them to dominate the English parties, divided among themselves on so many political issues. The French language was soon restored to its old place, and step by step all the principles that the popular party of Lower Canada had been fighting for previous to 1840 were granted—even an elective legislative council—under the new *régime*. The consequence was that French Canada eventually recognized its power, and its people forgot their old grievances, and were ready to sustain the Union into which they had entered with doubt and apprehension. It was the English-speaking people of the West that now raised a clamor against "French domination," when the representation granted in 1840 did not do justice to the increase of population in Upper Canada, where, since that year, the progress had been more rapid than in the French section. The consequence was that the two provinces, united in law, were practically divided on the floor of Parliament, and government at last became almost impossible from the division of parties and the controlling influence of French Canada, always determined to yield nothing to the cry from the Upper Province that would destroy the equality of representation. The solution of these difficulties, arising, it will be seen, from national antagonism, was found in a federal union, under which Lower Canada obtained supreme control over the provincial matters in which she has an immediate

* See address of M. Lafontaine (Turcotte, *Canada sous l'Union*, i., 60), in which he showed the injustice of the Act of Union.