

those made by the Local Legislature, and the latter shall be void so far as they are repugnant to, or inconsistent with, the former.³³

Richard Cartwright is pleased to report that “every reasonable precaution seems to have been taken against leaving behind us any reversionary legacies of sovereign state rights to stir up strife and discord among our children.”³⁴ Finally, John Scoble advises his colleagues that a “careful analysis of the scheme convinces me that the powers conferred on the General or Central Government secures it all the attributes of sovereignty, and the veto power which its executive will possess and to which all local legislation will be subject, will prevent a conflict of laws and jurisdictions in all matters of importance, so that I believe in its working it will be found, if not in form yet in fact and practically, a legislative union.”³⁵

Scoble’s reference to a “legislative union” is particularly significant because throughout the debates many delegates from Upper Canada who supported the Quebec Resolutions added that their only disappointment lay in the federal character of the proposed union. They would have preferred a legislative union--that is, an even more centralized regime than the one they were approving. Nevertheless, they would support the Quebec Resolutions because they bid fair to bring about a unified structure close enough to the legislative union they really desired.³⁶ Such statements, combined with those cited above go a long way toward supporting Dean Kennedy’s remark that “[s]eldom have statesmen more deliberately striven to write their purposes into law” and that these purposes included an extremely vigorous federal government.

Upon closer examination, however, the federalist case is not as strong as it might at first appear. The friends of Confederation from Lower Canada seemed at times to be reading a text quite different from the strongly centralized document revealed in the passages we have just quoted. Take, for example, the following comments from four of the most prominent members of the Quebec delegation supporting Confederation: