

country. And if in Canada we receive perhaps a somewhat larger amount than we absolutely require, it ought rather to be a subject of gratification to this House that it will possess the means of giving greater encouragement to our educational system, and greater development to those interests which are peculiarly entrusted to the charge of the local governments, and this, too, without making any greater demand than is at this time made upon the resources of the people. (Hear, hear.) A subsidy of 80 cents per head was provided, based upon the population according to the census of 1861. The amount, if taken upon the basis of the present population, would undoubtedly be considerably less; and it must be observed that the agreement does not contemplate any future extension of this amount. It is hoped that, being in itself fixed and permanent in its character, the local governments will see the importance—I may say the necessity—of their exercising a rigid and proper control over the expenditure of their several provinces. We thus obtain one of the greatest securities that can be offered to us that those influences which, in such a Legislature as we now possess in Canada, are brought to bear for the purpose of swelling the public expenditure, will not exist in the local legislatures, but will meet with such a resistance, from the mere fact of the inability of the local governments to obey them, as to produce a very considerable saving in the general expense of the whole country. (Hear, hear.) I have now, Mr. SPEAKER, only to advert to the last question which I have stated is necessary to be decided on the present occasion, and that is, whether under the proposed Confederation such additional expenses will be incurred as to render it undesirable. In considering this point, I must state that in my opinion the question of expense alone is by no means a fair criterion by which to judge of the advantages of a measure such as that now before the House. If it be looked at in its most restricted sense, the only point in which additional expense can be incurred, must be that of the simple cost of governing the country. In no other way that I am able to see, can there be additional expense charged upon the people; and looking at it in this point of view, we may well doubt whether the aggregate charge will be greater for the General Government, caring for the general interests of the whole, and for the local governments, attending merely to the local business of each section,—we may well doubt, I say, whether that expense will be

greater, in any considerable degree, than that which is required for our Government under the present system. (Hear, hear.) On the one hand we shall be free from the empty parade of small Courts entailed by our present system on each of these provinces, keeping up a pretence of regal show when the reality is wanting; we shall have the legislation of the General Government restricted to those great questions which may properly occupy the attention of the first men in the country; we shall not have our time frittered away in considering the merits of petty local bills, and therefore we may reasonably hope that the expenses of the General Legislature will be considerably less than even those of the Legislature of Canada at the present moment,—while, on the other hand, the local legislatures having to deal rather with municipal than great general questions, will be able to dispose of them in a manner more satisfactory to the people; and at infinitely less expense than now. I believe, therefore, the simple cost of the Government of the country will not be in reality any greater under the new than under the old system, but there are other items of expenditure for great public objects, the absence of which from the estimates of any country is an indication rather of weakness and of dependence than a subject that ought to form a source of satisfaction. If such items are not now found in the public expenditure, either of Canada or the Lower Provinces, it is the best proof that could be given that our position is one of inferiority, and that we do not possess either the power or the means to undertake such works as make such items necessary. Let me give one or two points as examples of my meaning; and first I will instance the great question of defence—(hear, hear)—the absence of items of expenditure for which can only be an indication that we are lacking in one of the chief elements of national greatness; that we do not properly value the institutions under which we live, and that we are not willing to make the sacrifices that every free people must make if they are desirous of preserving them. The same argument applies to public works, in connection with which it might be said that great advantage would arise from large expenditure, but with limited resources and an undeveloped territory it might be impossible for any small country to undertake the necessary outlay. Many works of this kind are not directly productive of revenue, although indirectly of the utmost advantage, and if the resources of a country generally cannot