

the respect of the people, and gave it an importance it did not previously possess. Since the Council has been made elective, not a single complaint has appeared against its new constitution, in the press, or in the form of public meetings, petitions or motions in the House. Has it produced any evil effects in the administration of the affairs of the country? Has the Government suffered from it? Has the Mother Country found any bad results from it? Has the country been the worse for it? And in what respect? Answer, you who desire to deprive the people of the right to elect that House, though they have not asked you to do so, and though you yourselves hold your seats by their will? The elective Legislative Council represents better the character, the wants and the aspirations of our Canadian society, than the Council appointed for life ever did. With regard to the talent of the country, it has represented it as well as it was represented under the old system. With regard to its moderation and its conservative spirit, experience has shown that it possessed these two qualities to a degree surpassing the expectation of all parties. I do not hesitate, therefore, to say that the change was a change for the better in every respect; that it satisfied and tranquillized public opinion, and that it secured to the country a more direct control over public affairs. Lower Canada has tested both systems of nomination, that by the Crown and that by the people, and it does not ask to return to the former. We had a life-nominated Council for half a century in Canada. Every one knows that the acts of that very Council drove the people of Lower Canada into rebellion in 1837! One of the great arguments advanced in support of the proposed scheme is that the electoral divisions are very extensive, and that the rich alone, by means of their wealth, can attain a seat in that House. It costs so much now-a-days, it is said, to carry an election! If that argument were of any value as regards the Legislative Council, it should have equal weight as regards the House of Assembly. To be consistent, you should have asked also for the appointment of the members of the Assembly, in place of having them elected by the people! But that is not the true reason. And besides, let those who do not wish to spend money remain at home, if the people refuse to elect them without being paid. Let corruption cease; adopt vote by ballot, which will destroy corruption, and there will be no need of

inventing imaginary grievances in order to restrict the liberties of the people. This Tory scheme will throw us back fifty years. It is nothing else than a plot! (Hear, hear.) I am opposed to this scheme of Confederation, because we are offered local parliaments which will be simply nonentities, with a mere semblance of power on questions of minor importance. When we shall have seen the Local Parliament in operation with its restricted powers (restricted except as regards expenditure, extravagance, and the power of taxing real property), it will soon be found, as it is in fact destined to become, a mere taxing machine. Nothing more, nothing less! The expenditure of Lower Canada for justice, education, asylums, hospitals, courts, prisons, interest on the debt, &c., &c., added to the expense of a Local Government and Parliament, will exceed \$2,000,000. The revenue will fall far short of that amount. Direct taxation would be a necessary consequence of the establishment of the new system, without any compensation for the fresh burthen which the people must bear. I have said enough to shew the difference between the American federal system and that proposed for our adoption. In the American union each state is sovereign over all that immediately concerns it. Here, everything would be submitted to the General Parliament. Lower Canada is opposed to free trade in money, and desires to limit the rate of interest; and yet this she could not do, inasmuch as that very ordinary question would be under the control of the General Parliament. Whether the principle be a sound one or not, it is admitted that nine-tenths of our people desire that the rate of interest should be fixed. Each state of the American union regulates questions of this kind as it chooses, without the intervention of neighboring states, or of the Washington Government. Thus, the rate of interest varies in a great many of the states, and in others it is not fixed. In Vermont the rate is six per cent.; in New York, seven per cent.; in Ohio, ten per cent.; in Illinois, thirty per cent.; and in the other states, trade in money is free. These are facts which prove that the real Federal system resembles in no sense that which we are asked to adopt. (Hear, hear.) I might give a host of facts of this kind in support of my position; but I shall confine myself to one. It is well known that the people of Lower Canada are almost unanimous in repudiating the principle of divorce. Nevertheless, under Confederation the Parliament of Lower Canada is not to have the right of regulating