

conflicts between general and local legislation and that they should be resolved in favor of the federal government.⁴²

The highly centralized character of the proposed confederation did not escape its opponents from Quebec. Unlike Taché, Cartier, et al., anti-confederationists, like the Dorions (A.A. and J.B.E.), Joseph Perrault, and L.A. Olivier, agreed entirely with John A. Macdonald's strongly federalist interpretation of the proposed constitution and for that very reason voted against it. Consider the following:

J.B.E. Dorion--"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."⁴³

Joseph Perrault--"...[L]ocal governments...will be nothing more than municipal councils, vested with small and absurd powers, unworthy of a free people, which allow us at most the control of our roads, our schools, and our lands."⁴⁴

A.A. Dorion--"I find that the powers assigned to the General Parliament enable it to legislate on all subjects whatsoever. It is an error to imagine that these powers are defined and limited, by the 29th clause of the resolutions. Were it desirous of legislating on subjects placed under the jurisdiction of the local legislatures, there is not a word in these resolutions which can be construed to prevent it, and if the local legislatures complain, Parliament may turn away and refuse to hear their complaints, because all the sovereignty is vested in the General Government, and there is no authority to define its functions and attributes and those of the local governments."⁴⁵

If we look only at the franco-français debate on the Resolutions, it seems clear that the opponents of confederation read the text more accurately but the Quebec supporters read it more wisely.⁴⁶ It is inconceivable that men as sophisticated as Taché, Cartier, and Langevin did not understand the meaning of the text before them. They understood it only too well, but imposed a strained interpretation upon it that would sufficiently obfuscate its