

ment of their local affairs. Such a municipal system as we have in Canada is all that is necessary to secure that end. With the political franchise extended to all classes of the community, whether native-born or naturalized, the national life could not fail to develop itself in forms that would give permanence to its institutions, contentment to its people, and strength to its government.

The opinions which I entertained in 1859 I entertain now. Now, as then, I am in favor of the unification of the British American Provinces. Now, as then, I am opposed to the Federal principle, as exemplified in the formation and practical working of the Government of the United States. The greatest statesmen, the wisest men, who became conspicuous during the American revolution, were clearly of opinion that a government to be strong must be a unit, and must possess within itself, and in all its organs, supreme power and a commanding influence. To diffuse those powers, or even to share them with state or local governments, they felt would weaken it in its most vital parts. They would, therefore, have stripped the States of every attribute of sovereignty, and confined their action to matters of a purely local or municipal character; but they had not the power, and the consequences are visible in the fratricidal war now raging among them, devastating their fairest provinces and filling the land with mourning and woe. The lessons of history and the experience of other peoples should not be lost upon us; and for myself, I hesitate not to say that if, in the proposed Federation of the British American colonies, we were to follow the example of the framers of the Government of the United States, or to copy its Constitution, it would have my most determined opposition. The scheme before us, however, is formed after a different model, and in its essential features is in perfect contrast to that on which the Constitution of the United States is based. It is true it creates local governments with large legislative and executive powers; it is true it gives those governments concurrent powers with the General Government; it is true it gives them possession of the public lands within their several jurisdictions; it is true it allows two of those governments to levy export duties on lumber, coal and other minerals,—and looked at in the light of an advanced political science, this is to be lamented; but looked at in the light of possible and practicable statesmanship, it was unavoidable. I am, therefore, prepared to accept it as a whole, as in fact the best that

could have been produced under the circumstances in which it was framed. (Hear, hear.) 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. (Hear, hear.) Taking this general and, as I believe, correct view of the case, I shall abstain from all criticism of its minor details, in the hope that what is found hereafter immature or unworkable will be abandoned by general consent. The Imperial Government will take care, no doubt, that that part of the scheme which conflicts with the prerogatives of the Crown will be removed, or, at all events, be brought into harmony with them. On one or two points brought out very fully by the Catholic members of the House in opposition to the scheme, I shall venture to offer a few remarks. They take exception to the power conferred on the General Government in the matter of marriage and divorce. I think, sir, the power is very properly placed there. I respect their religious convictions; as a Protestant, I ask them to respect mine. We owe each other mutual toleration. If the Protestant section of this House and this province do not regard marriage as a sacrament, and, therefore, inviolable and indissoluble, I believe they will be found to have as high an opinion of the sacred obligations involved in it, and admit it to be as binding upon the conscience of all who enter upon that holy and honorable state, as their Catholic fellow-subjects. But *quod* the state or the civil government of the country, Protestants at large, regard marriage as a civil contract only, and consequently dissoluble on cause shown. This view ought not to be offensive to the judgment or the conscience of our Catholic friends, for it will not and cannot interfere in the slightest degree, either with the form or the continuity of their marriages; and surely they will grant to us, the non-Catholic section of the province, that liberty of conscience in this matter which they claim and enjoy themselves. (Hear, hear.) Another point touched upon by my honorable friend the member for Peterborough (Col. HAULTAIN) demands from me a passing remark. I believe that my honorable friend correctly interpreted the feelings of Protestants in Lower