

this debate, by honorable gentlemen who were delegates to the Conference held in this city, that the two schemes were discussed in that Conference—the Legislative and the Federal—and that the former was found to be impracticable. It is, therefore, not possible for us now to decide the question in favor of a legislative union. We have evidence before us that is satisfactory to my mind, that probably all of the other provinces would refuse to take part in a legislative union. The Honorable Attorney General West, in his speech at the opening of the debate, gave us sufficient information on the point to convince the House that this question had been fully discussed in the Conference, and the legislative plan rejected, on account of its being impracticable. For this reason, sir, believing that the choice before us is either to accept a Federal union or reject the proposal entirely, I give my assent to the present scheme without hesitation. (Hear, hear.) It is brought as one of the strongest arguments against this union that the Federal Government will be far more expensive than our present system. That may be true to some extent; but my impression is that it will not be found true to the extent represented. We must bear in mind that we have in each province a Government fully constituted, with all the machinery necessary for carrying on the business of government. Therefore the new machinery required would be very little, and would amount simply to the local legislatures for Upper and Lower Canada. Upon these general principles then, I must say that I shall give my adhesion to the scheme of union submitted to us; and as was well remarked by the hon. member for Dundas (Mr. J. S. Ross), the language in which the scheme has been laid before us must prove very acceptable to all who are in favor of a union such as that proposed. The gentlemen composing the Conference could not have used language more acceptable to me than that in which the first resolution is couched, except in the use of the word "Federal," instead of "Legislative." The resolution reads:—

The best interests and present and future prosperity of British North America will be promoted by a Federal union under the Crown of Great Britain, provided such a union can be effected on principles just to the several provinces.

Now, sir, I am prepared to say here, and I think I but echo the voice of every hon.

gentleman present, that all the people ask is that the union be based upon principles just to the several provinces. (Hear, hear.) We ask nothing more. Again, sir, the language employed in the third resolution is most satisfactory:—

In framing a Constitution for the General Government, the Conference, with a view to the perpetuation of the connection with the Mother Country, &c., to the promotion of the best interests of the people of these provinces, desire to follow the model of the British Constitution, so far as our circumstances will permit.

Surely, sir, we all agree that no better model can be found, or better system of government followed, than that of the British Constitution. (Hear, hear.) One of the features of this scheme that commends itself strongly to my approbation is the marked distinction between the system that is submitted to us, and that which is in existence in the neighboring republic. I believe that to a great extent we may trace the unfortunate difficulties that exist in that country to the absurd doctrine of state rights. Instead of their Central Government having, in the first instance, supreme power, and delegating certain powers to the local or state governments, the very reverse is the principle on which their Constitution is founded. Their local governments possess the principal power, and have delegated certain powers to the General Government. In the scheme submitted to us, I am happy to observe that the principal and supreme power is placed in the hands of the General Government, and that the powers deputed to the local governments are of a limited character. (Hear, hear.) I am glad also to observe that in the proposed organization of the General Legislature of the united provinces, that question which has so long agitated the people of Canada—representation by population—is in a fair way of being satisfactorily solved. It is proposed that in the General Legislature, or House of Commons as it is to be called, each province shall be represented in accordance with its population, thereby removing that which has been so long a source of agitation in Upper Canada, and of vexation to Lower Canada, and which has led to the discussion of the scheme now before the House. In reference to the organization of the Legislative Council, I may say that I have always been found among those who opposed the introduction of the elective principle into the constitution of that body.