

inclination it is to extend his protection equally over the cottage of the poor and over the palace of the rich, and to dispense equal justice to both. (Cheers.) Our Ministers will still be responsible to the people. In the States, the President is under no obligation to consult his Cabinet, which is composed merely of the heads of departments. In the scheme which now engages our attention, all matters of general interest, which are not left to be disposed of by the local legislatures, will be settled by the General or Central Government, and the disposal of local matters will belong to the local governments. Accordingly all necessary power has been assigned to the general as to the local legislatures; and that source of weakness has been avoided which has been so frequent a cause of trouble in the neighboring States—the conflict of jurisdiction and authority between single states and the Federal or Central authority. It is really astonishing to see the different means employed by the journals in the interest of the unreasoning opponents of the plan of Confederation. They utter cries of distress, amidst which the veil of party is easily seen through. According to their views, no good can come out of the system for either party in the commonwealth. "Think twice of what you are doing, you English Protestants of Lower Canada! The Local Government will swallow you up," cries the *Montreal Witness*. "Take care of yourselves, you French-Canadians of the Catholic Church!" bellows the *Montreal True Witness*; "if the plan of Confederation is sanctioned by the Legislature, you will disappear like a dream: the hydra of the Central Government will poison you with its pestiferous breath." (Hear, hear.) And the other journals of the same party, inspired by the same spirit, open full cry on the plan of Confederation, as nothing less than a "political suicide!" Others there are—and some in the interest of the present Government—who have some misgivings, some doubts, touching the clauses relating to marriage and divorce. With respect to the provisions of the instrument which bears on these two important questions, they seem at first sight, I confess, a little alarming to Catholics—to us who have learned from the Church the indissolubility of the marriage bond, who look upon marriage not only as a civil contract, but "a sacrament." With reference to this subject, I answer that the system on which the new Constitution will be based is to be considered in the aspect

which it bears to all the provinces. We are not all Catholics, and the majority are Protestants. Again, if the control of matters connected with marriage and divorce had been assigned to the local governments, what would have been the fate of our co-religionists in Upper Canada, who are in a minority in that province? Add to this, we have not in Canada at present any divorce law, and we need not apprehend that the Federal Government will impose one upon us. Nothing indicates that the proportion of Catholic members in the Federal Legislature will not be about equal to what it is in the Parliament of United Canada. Moreover, everybody is aware that it was by the help of the Protestants, who think as we do on this subject, that we have hitherto escaped the passing of a divorce law. Divorce is not looked upon with a favorable eye by all Protestants; far from it, and we must hope that at no distant time that source of disorder and scandal of every species will be effaced from the parliamentary records of every Christian community. (Hear, hear.) We must bear in mind, also, that there are Catholics elsewhere besides in Lower and Upper Canada; they are to be found in all the Lower Provinces, and what would be their position if these questions were left to the local legislatures? The Catholics, therefore, of both Upper and Lower Canada, as well as those of the Lower Provinces, are directly interested in the removal of these questions from the local legislatures. It seems to me that every man who studies this question in a Catholic point of view, as it stands in the five provinces, will find that the Conference was perfectly right in not leaving the question of divorce to the control of the local governments. I shall not enter into all the details of the plan of Confederation, inasmuch as hereafter each of its clauses will be discussed. I shall reserve, however, the right of adding a few words. I think, therefore, Mr. SPEAKER, that every man who has the interests of his country at heart—every man who will take the pains to read history, the great teacher of kings and nations, will be convinced that situated as are the five provinces of British North America, separated, disunited, with no social, political or commercial ties to bind them together, but having tariffs calculated to injure each other, but no free interchange of commodities—without railways by which they might hold communication during the long winters, when the rivers are obstructed with