

be more disposed to stretch its prerogatives and to trench upon the domain of the local governments than to narrow down and retain its authority. The scheme then, in my opinion, is defective in that it inverts this order and gives to the General Government too much power and to the local governments too little. As it is now, if the scheme goes into operation, the local governments will be in danger of being crushed (*écrasés*) by the General Government. The tendency of the whole scheme seems to be one of political retrogression instead of advancement.

HON. SIR E. P. TACHÉ—Hear! hear!

HON. MR. OLIVIER—I am glad the Hon. Premier seems so strongly to approve of what I say.

HON. SIR E. P. TACHÉ—Ah! but it is exactly the contrary.

HON. MR. OLIVIER—Then I am sorry not to obtain his approval—(laughter)—but nevertheless I hold that the policy disclosed in the scheme is a backward policy. I want to progress, I want to see the country advance, I want to see the liberties of the country unfolding and expanding; but instead of this our rulers are narrowing them down and restricting their free exercise. (Hear.) They are now proposing to take away the elective principle in its application to this Chamber, and that too, without even having received a petition or sign of any kind from the people that such is their wish. If this is not a policy of retrogression I can hardly imagine what would be. I was not sent here to assist in doing any such thing, and am not aware that there has been any evidence of a desire in the country for a return to the old mode of appointment by the Crown. I am not aware of one complaint, or of any dissatisfaction whatever with the present constitution of the Legislative Council, and I therefore regard it as not a little strange that a few gentlemen, without mission or warrant, should have devised such a change, and should be trying to press it upon the Legislature and the country. I cannot say what is the general feeling in the public mind in favor of a Confederation of Canada and the Maritime Provinces, and so far, perhaps, from being opposed to it personally, I would be glad if it could be accomplished upon principles I can approve. I do not wish, however, to see the local governments crushed under a great central power, and I am sure the people cannot wish, and do not wish, to give up the principle of election in respect of this House. They had fought too long for the privilege to do that, and one

thing was quite clear, we were not sent to Parliament to destroy our present Constitution. There is a great difference between making machinery work and breaking it to pieces, and I maintain that we were elected to legislate within the Constitution, not to legislate away the Constitution. When I was elected I expected to go back to my constituents to give them an account of the manner in which I had fulfilled the duty entrusted to me, not to take advantage of my position to provide for myself a seat for life. No, my constituents never gave me this right, nor was any elected member entrusted with it, and who ever assume to vote away the liberties of the people in this manner, betray their mandate. If it was desired that the people should surrender this right they should have been informed of such desire in good time, so that they might have considered the question; but without warning them, or consulting them, this most highly-prized principle was bartered away to the Lower Provinces for a Confederation which could not last. The Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands had told the House that the repartition of Lower Canada according to the present electoral divisions had been retained for the purpose of protecting the British population of Lower Canada. I think that if, with the retaining these electoral divisions the elective principle was also retained, the French population of Lower Canada would also find in it their protection. For then each division would be free to choose for its representative in the Federal Legislative Council a man attached to the institutions of Lower Canada, while, in giving the nomination of the legislative councillors to the Federal power, the latter would be at liberty to choose whomsoever it thought proper, and, unfortunately—a circumstance which I do not anticipate, but which may occur—the General Government, when formed, might be surrounded by coteries inimical to Lower Canada interests, and be led by them to choose members for the Legislative Council hostile to the views of Lower Canada. I consider, therefore, an elective Legislative Council in the Confederation as essential to the interests of Lower Canada. Nothing is gained politically by the scheme any more than financially. The honorable member for Niagara has abundantly proved that all the results to Canada would be a sacrifice of principles and of money. To assure the advantages to themselves of the scheme of Confederation, the Lower Provinces had stipulated first for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway,