

never found any other points of difference between the English and the French-Canadians who inhabit this country, but those arising from their religion, their language, and their laws; for we have the same attachment that they have to the British Empire, and I am convinced that no hon. member of this House will express a contrary opinion. (Hear, hear.) This being admitted, Mr. SPEAKER, I beg to call the attention of the House to the twenty-ninth resolution. It reads as follows:—

The General Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, welfare and good government of the Federated Provinces (saving the Sovereignty of England), and especially laws respecting the following subjects:—

Then, after a long enumeration of subjects on which the General Government is to have power to legislate, we come to the 31st paragraph, which relates to marriage and divorce. On the 2nd July, 1864, the Prime Minister, (Hon. Sir ETIENNE PASCAL TACHÉ), in the course of an eloquent speech delivered on the second reading of the Benning Divorce Bill, spoke as follows in the Legislative Council:—

I oppose the second reading of the bill, and I do so on the principle that divorce is antichristian and antinational. [And after having cited various passages from the Bible, he continued:] Divorce is immoral in its consequences, and, worse still, it destroys society by destroying the family. [And again:] I should be sorry to wound the feelings of any one, but we have to protect society in general, and we have certain duties to discharge. For my part, I should be acting against my conscience, my religion and my country, if I did not oppose the bill. Death alone can dissolve marriage—that is the teaching of the Apostles, and it is also the doctrine of all the Fathers and Councils.

On the 9th July of the same year, the Hon. Solicitor General for Lower Canada, in his speech delivered in this House on the same subject, expressed himself as follows:—

If I oppose the bill now before the House, it is not because I do not believe that the person petitioning for it has just grounds of complaint, but because we are asked to do that which is diametrically opposed to my principles in this matter; and because, moreover, I consider that the House has not the right to dissolve the marriage contracted between the parties interested, and to permit them to marry again.

This opinion of the Hon. Solicitor General for Lower Canada was supported by the whole of the French-Canadian and Catholic members, who declared, on that occasion, by voting even against the first reading of the

bill, that they were opposed to the principle of divorce; and their opinion was concurred in and supported by the greater part of the newspapers in Lower Canada. The *Canadien* said, on that occasion:—

The Divorce Bill was, we regret to say, read a first time yesterday evening. The division was 61 votes against 42. There is, therefore, no hope of this antisocial measure being defeated. The duty of reflecting men, nevertheless, is to warn society of the danger in which it is placed; to protest strongly against the deadly assaults made upon it. Messrs. LANGVIN, MCGEE and CARTIER discharged, yesterday evening, that high and important duty, and, as representatives of Lower Canada society, they addressed in eloquent terms warnings to society in Upper Canada.

The *Courrier du Canada*, with reference to the same question, said:—

If any one says that the Church is in error when, for various reasons, she decides that a separation between married persons, in so far as regards the marriage bed or cohabitation, may take place for a definite or an indefinite period, let him be anathema. That is the doctrine of the Catholic Church as to marriage, and in this instance, as in every other, it is in accordance with the laws of nature, which themselves repel divorce as something monstrous.

The *Journal de Québec* of the 9th June, 1864, says:—

The question of divorce recurs periodically to occupy the attention of the House and afflict the consciences of Catholics. Divorce is the most powerful agent for effecting the dissolution of society, for marriage is the social formula; once you open the flood-gates of divorce, no matter under what pretext, how are you to dam up the tide and prevent it from submerging the whole of society?

Now, Mr. SPEAKER, as I said a moment ago, these were the opinions of all French-Canadians, and, with reference to this question, I cannot imagine anything to justify the change of opinion which has manifested itself amongst a certain number of French-Canadian members and our Catholic ministers. If it be true that a Catholic cannot adopt the principle of divorce, and if we are in conscience bound to oppose it in our capacity as legislators, by voting against every measure tending to sanction it, I ask how we can vote for a resolution purporting to vest in the Federal Legislature the power of legislating on the subject? The hon. member for Montmorency, in the course of his speech in this House the day before yesterday, told us that if it had not been recorded in the resolutions