

Lower Canada (Hon. Mr. **LANGÉVIN**) to interpret it correctly in any other sense. (Hear, hear.) He has really given us a magnificent explanation of the clause, but it seems to me that as the House is called upon to deal with written resolutions, we must interpret them as they are laid before us; the House cannot scrutinise the hidden intentions of the Government in the matter. If the resolutions have any other meaning than that expressed on the face of them, the House is entitled to call upon the Government to explain and correct them. The motion now before the House is as follows:—

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that She may be graciously pleased to cause a measure to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament, for uniting the Colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island in one government, with provisions based on certain resolutions which were adopted at a Conference of Delegates from the said Colonies, held at the city of Quebec, on the 10th October, 1864.

I assert, then, that if we vote this Address, we cannot complain if the Imperial Government should declare that the Federal Legislature shall have the right to legislate on all matters relating to marriage and divorce.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—Who is to draw up the Constitution?

MR. GEOFFRION—The Imperial Government.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—Not at all. It will be drawn up here and submitted to the Imperial Government.

MR. GEOFFRION—If I am not mistaken as to the meaning of the motion, the Address asks Her Majesty to cause a measure to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament for the purpose of uniting the Colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island in one government, with provisions based on certain resolutions which were adopted at a Conference of delegates from the said colonies. Now, if the Imperial Government is to adopt the measure, they can do as was done in 1856, with reference to the Legislative Council, and we cannot complain if they should amend it in a sense distasteful to us, since our resolutions declare that the Local Government shall have the right to legislate on property and civil rights, except such portions thereof as shall be vested in the Federal Government—and amongst the subjects left to the latter are marriage and

divorce. (Hear, hear.) I know the answer that will be made to me on this point. It will be said that it is through party spirit I am standing up to defend religion, and that I desire to lead this Honorable House to believe that by voting for these resolutions we endanger our religious institutions. But it appears to me, **MR. SPEAKER**, that for all of us Catholics, the indissolubility of marriage is an article of religion, and that if the resolutions do not admit that doctrine of the Church, they must be rejected by every one of us. But it will perhaps be asked—"How does it happen that our Catholic clergy remain passive whilst one of the dogmas of our religion is thus being undermined?" I deny, **MR. SPEAKER**, that the Canadian clergy are in favor of the Ministerial scheme, and I am supported in this by the fact that the petitions sent here against the scheme were signed by several priests.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—By how many?

MR. GEOFFRION—Several of them have signed the petitions; I can fancy that some members of the clergy are in favor of the project, but I deny that the clergy in general profess the same sentiments. We have not received a single petition in favor of Confederation, and every day large numbers of them reach us, praying for the abandonment of the scheme.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—Do not drag the clergy into the debate: we have not done so.

MR. GEOFFRION—Yes, you have done it. The Honorable Attorney General for Lower Canada said in this House that the clergy were in favor of the scheme. Now, I maintain that a great many priests are opposed to Confederation. (Hear, hear.) I find in the *Canadien* of this day a letter written by a member of the clergy, who expresses himself in the following terms on the subject of Confederation—

MR. ROBITAILLE—Is the letter really written by a priest?

MR. GEOFFRION—If the honorable member has any doubt on that point, he can solve it by applying to the honorable member for the county of Quebec, who is the proprietor of the paper. This is what the reverend gentleman says:—"The clergy are not in favor of your Confederation as it is proposed; a great many of them, it is true, have faith in it, and trust in our public men, but a good many of them also dread it, and would like to see it amended." It is quite easy for any one who takes the trouble to reflect on this matter,