

the class that composes the House of Lords in England. The British Government is undoubtedly the best-balanced government in the world; but we cannot exactly copy the system here, because of the absence of the class to which I have referred. The nearest approach that we can have to the House of Lords is, in my opinion, an elective Legislative Council, the members of which shall hold office for an extended period. My hon. friend from Lambton, in the very excellent speech he made to the House yesterday, said that if both Houses were made elective their circumstances and powers would be so similar that neither would be a check upon the other; but I contend that if we had an elective Upper House, with the members representing larger constituencies and elected for a longer period than the members of the Lower House, it would be less liable to be influenced by every change of public opinion, and conservative enough in its character to be a wholesome check upon rash and hasty legislation. (Hear, hear.) But although the scheme now proposed does not make these provisions, there are many things in it that I can approve of. That the General Government should have control over many matters committed to it by the scheme is, I think, quite right. The customs is a branch of the administration that has ramifications throughout the whole country, and it and the appointments connected with it should be in the hands of the General Government. So, too, with regard to the post office, which affects the whole country, and should be under the same control. The militia and all matters connected with the defence of the country should also be placed under the control of the Central Government; and the scheme would be defective if it were otherwise: I think there is no question more important now to us than that of defence. A military spirit seems to have seized the people all over the continent, and promises to control their action for a long time. I think it wise, therefore, that provision should be made by which the General Government can put the country into a state of preparation for whatever may occur. It is well also, in my opinion, that the judges should be appointed by that government. I like to see an independent judiciary, and believe that this will be secured to us by the mode proposed in these resolutions. (Hear, hear.) It is hardly necessary for me to make allusion to the local governments; there

are so many propositions connected with them, and so little is known of what their constitution will be, that it is hardly possible indeed for me to refer to them. I would like to be informed as to their character and authority before speaking of them. My opinion is, that they should have certain powers defined in written constitutions, so that beyond these powers they would have no right to legislate, and if they did, that their legislation should be set aside and rendered null and void by the superior courts. I believe that the British Constitution is of that elastic character that the institutions which exist under it can be made most popular and still work well. I think history has proved this to be the case. Under it we have kept sacred the great principle of responsible government which we now enjoy, and under which ministers of the Crown hold seats in and are responsible to the Legislature. Well, we want no change in that principle; for I think it is the greatest safeguard to liberty, not only in England, but the world. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the executive head of the General Government, appointment by the Crown as at present is the only mode that is desirable. It will not do to tamper with or change this provision of our government; for if we become detached from and cease to be a dependency of the British Crown, what do we become? We must necessarily become independent, and when that state of political existence is reached, we know not what will follow. (Hear, hear.) The question may be asked, is the Constitution foreshadowed in these resolutions such as can be accepted by the people of this country? Is there a possibility, if it be defective, of bettering or amending it? I think that in many of its details it has a great deal that is good; and if, in portions where it is desirable, it cannot be amended, I think, nevertheless, that the people of this country would hardly be justified in rejecting it. (Hear, hear.) There is no doubt that all history shows that nothing in the way of government is ever considered a finality. Changes are continually going on in all forms of government. The political history of our own country even is proof of this fact. At the time of the union of these provinces, the members of the Legislative Council were appointed by the Crown, but since then there has been a change, and they are now elected by the people. At that time, too, the wardens of