

public mind of England would deeply regret the loss of these provinces—yet, if the people of British North America after full deliberation had stated that they considered it was for their interest, for the advantage of the future of British North America to sever the tie, such is the generosity of the people of England, that, whatever their desire to keep these colonies, they would not seek to compel us to remain unwilling subjects of the British Crown. If therefore, at the Conference, we had arrived at the conclusion, that it was for the interest of these provinces that a severance should take place, I am sure that Her Majesty and the Imperial Parliament would have sanctioned that severance. We accordingly felt that there was a propriety in giving a distinct declaration of opinion on that point, and that, in framing the Constitution, its first sentence should declare, that “The Executive authority or government shall be vested in the Sovereign of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and be administered according to the well understood principles of the British Constitution, by the Sovereign personally, or by the Representative of the Sovereign duly authorised.” That resolution met with the unanimous assent of the Conference. The desire to remain connected with Great Britain and to retain our allegiance to Her Majesty was unanimous. Not a single suggestion was made, that it could, by any possibility, be for the interest of the colonies, or of any section or portion of them, that there should be a severance of our connection. Although we knew it to be possible that Canada, from her position, might be exposed to all the horrors of war, by reason of causes of hostility arising between Great Britain and the United States—causes over which we had no control, and which we had no hand in bringing about—yet there was a unanimous feeling of willingness to run all the hazards of war, if war must come, rather than lose the connection between the Mother Country and these colonies. (Cheers.) We provide that “the Executive authority shall be administered by the Sovereign personally, or by the Representative of the Sovereign duly authorised.” It is too much to expect that the Queen should vouchsafe us her personal governance or presence, except to pay us, as the heir apparent of the Throne, our future Sovereign has already paid us, the graceful compliment of a visit. The Executive authority must therefore be ad-

ministered by Her Majesty's Representative. We place no restriction on Her Majesty's prerogative in the selection of her representative. As it is now, so it will be if this Constitution is adopted. The Sovereign has unrestricted freedom of choice. Whether in making her selection she may send us one of her own family, a Royal Prince, as a Viceroy to rule over us, or one of the great statesmen of England to represent her, we know not. We leave that to Her Majesty in all confidence. But we may be permitted to hope, that when the union takes place, and we become the great country which British North America is certain to be, it will be an object worthy the ambition of the statesmen of England to be charged with presiding over our destinies. (Hear, hear.) Let me now invite the attention of the House to the provisions in the Constitution respecting the legislative power. The sixth resolution says, “There shall be a general legislature or parliament for the federated provinces, composed of a Legislative Council and a House of Commons.” This resolution has been cavilled at in the English press as if it excluded the Sovereign as a portion of the legislature. In one sense, that stricture was just—because in strict constitutional language, the legislature of England consists of King, Lords and Commons. But, on the other hand, in ordinary parlance we speak of “the King and his Parliament,” or “the King summoning his Parliament,” the three estates—Lords spiritual, temporal Lords, and the House of Commons, and I observe that such a writer as Hallam occasionally uses the word Parliament in that restricted sense. At best it is merely a verbal criticism. The legislature of British North America will be composed of King, Lords, and Commons. The Legislative Council will stand in the same relation to the Lower House, as the House of Lords to the House of Commons in England, having the same power of initiating all matters of legislation, except the granting of money. As regards the Lower House, it may not appear to matter much, whether it is called the House of Commons or House of Assembly. It will bear whatever name the Parliament of England may choose to give it, but “The House of Commons” is the name we should prefer, as shewing that it represents the Commons of