

of substantive resolutions which, however little they might have met the sense of the majority of this House, express the views of a large majority of my constituents. It would interest them to see how far those views met the approbation of the representatives of the people here; it would interest them to know how far honorable gentlemen from Upper Canada are prepared to go to insure to the English speaking minority of Lower Canada those rights and liberties which they claim for themselves; it would afford us some criterion by which we might measure the degree of protection we should find in the Federal Parliament, from possible oppression in our Local Parliament. For if honorable gentlemen from Upper Canada, on the floor of this House, will not hear us to-day, if they manifest an indifference to the injustice about to be inflicted upon the English speaking inhabitants of Lower Canada by the proposed Constitution, what guarantee have we that similar selfishness may not mark their conduct after we shall be powerless to rebuke it? I will read those resolutions which I had designed to propose, for the purpose of obtaining the opinion of the House on a modification of this measure, which, if it must be adopted, might possibly have been so amended as to remove many serious objections now entertained to it by a large portion of the people of Lower Canada. They are in these words :—

*Resolved*, That assuming the Federal system of government to be a political necessity in a union of the British North American provinces, any Confederation of those provinces which ignores the difference of race, language and religion of the inhabitants of the respective states or territories sought to be thus united, and is not framed with a view to secure to the inhabitants of each such state or territory the management of their own local affairs, in accordance with their own peculiar views and sentiments, is unwise and inexpedient, and not conducive to good government, or to the peace and tranquillity of those for whom it is framed.

This resolution I put forth simply for the sake of shewing the idea which I had in my mind, without, I am free to confess, any expectation that the particular modification which I was about to propose would meet the sense of the majority of this House, but as giving an indication of the direction in which the English-speaking inhabitants of Lower Canada would consider that their interests might be best preserved. The second resolution I designed to propose is as follows:—

*Resolved*, That with a view to secure to that

101

portion of the inhabitants of Lower Canada speaking the English language, the free exercise and enjoyment of their own ideas, institutions and rights, in any proposed Confederation of the provinces, Canada should be divided into three civil divisions, to wit: Western, Central, and Eastern Canada.

Why is it that objection is made to a legislative union? The reason why so large a portion of the people of Lower Canada of French origin will not consent to a legislative union, is the very reason that makes it desirable to the English speaking population of Lower Canada. We are in favor of a legislative union. We desire that Canada should be a united people, ignoring sectionalism, and basing our institutions upon one broad principle of Canadian nationality, which shall blend all races, and in time obliterate all accidental distinctions of language, religion, or origin. Our French-Canadian fellow-subjects will not consent to this. If they will not hear our arguments, let them listen to their own. If Federalism is necessary for the protection of their rights, it is necessary in a tenfold degree for the protection of the rights of the English speaking minority. They tell us we may rely upon their well-known liberality and toleration. We cannot consent to hold our liberties by mere sufferance, when we are entitled to hold them by right. It would be unworthy of us to submit to such humiliation. In these remarks which are forced from me, and which I am compelled to make in defence of the rights and liberties of those who sent me here, I mean no disrespect to those of another origin—to the French-Canadian honorable gentlemen whom I see around me. (Hear, hear.) In many respects I sympathise with them, and have always sympathised with them. I desire to live among my French-Canadian fellow-subjects in peace. I desire to maintain those amicable relations which have always subsisted between the English-speaking and the French-Canadian populations of Lower Canada. As I said before, I sympathise with my French-Canadian fellow-subjects in many respects. I respect their character, I admire their laws. But this antagonism is not courted by me. It is forced upon me. Let me call the attention of honorable gentlemen, more especially of those from Upper Canada, to the position in which this proposed Constitution now before the House would place the English-speaking people of Lower Canada. I may say at the outset, that although they number only one-fourth of the population, they possess at least one-third of the property,