

tional protection shall be afforded; and in that case, I say, without hesitation, that what will be done for one portion of the country will also be done for the other portions—*justice égale distributive*. Hear, hear.) Honorable gentlemen have said that we have merely submitted the general scheme of the Government, and they have called upon us to give details—details about the School bill, details about the local governments, and the immense string of other details embraced in the amendment moved the other day by my hon. friend from Grandville (Hon. Mr. LÉTELLIER DE ST. JUST), which I am sure was at least a fathom long, and a very long fathom too. (Laughter.) Now, suppose we had all these matters before us, could we really digest such a mass of information as hon. gentlemen have asked for? It seems to me it would be like introducing liquids into a vessel whose mouth is very small; if you throw in the liquid rapidly and in two great quantities, the vessel will be overflowed, and the fluid won't be got into it. I think we have enough before us at present, when we have the principal matter, without the accessories. For, what would be the use of the accessories if you reject the principle? (Hear, hear.) Depend upon it, as soon as these resolutions are concurred in, then the details will be given one after the other; and I trust they will be of such a nature as to meet with the approval of the majority of this Honorable House. (Hear, hear.) Some hon. gentlemen have told us that this was not a Federal union—that the project before you, hon. gentlemen, was in point of fact a project for a Legislative union. One hon. gentleman who took this view read the 29th section, in order to shew that the General Government, if it chose, could repeal any of the local acts of the different local legislatures—that the General Government, for instance, could do away with our religious and benevolent corporations, or deprive them of their property. I think the honorable gentleman must have been rather short-sighted when he read the 29th resolution, for he omitted a very important part of it; and, if he had not omitted that part, I do not think he would have said that this Federal scheme was really a scheme for a Legislative union. I have no doubt my honorable friend acted in good faith; but being rather short-sighted, he did not read the whole clause; otherwise he must have arrived at a different conclusion. The 29th section says: "The General Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, welfare and good

government of the Federated Provinces (saying the sovereignty of England), and especially laws respecting the following subjects." Then follows a list of all the subjects committed to the General Government. But the resolution does not finish there. There is something that comes after all that, and it is this: "And generally respecting all matters of a general character, not specially and exclusively reserved for the local governments and legislatures." Now I would ask honorable gentlemen if an act incorporating a religious body or benevolent society here in Lower Canada is a subject of a general character; is it not a subject purely local? (Hear, hear.) Take, for instance, the sisters of charity. Could the General Government, under this clause, interfere with the privileges of those ladies? I say they could not. I suppose the honorable gentleman who used the argument advanced it conscientiously and in good faith. But I think it is quite evident from a reading of the resolution that, if Confederation takes place, the General Government will have no power to interfere with such matters. (Hear, hear.) I must say positively, if I am competent to draw any conclusion at all from what I read, that the General Government will have no right to meddle at all with those religious and benevolent corporations, none in the world. (Hear, hear.) Remarks have also been made about the laws of divorce and marriage, and the honorable member for the division of DeLanaudière (Hon. Mr. OLIVIER) told us that the Confederence had done well in transferring the power of divorce to the General Government. On his part, I think this was a wise view of the question, and I am glad to have the opportunity of now telling him so. He was, however, very uneasy about the word "marriage." Well, I will try to put him right and at his ease on that point; and I will give him the answer as I find it put down in writing, so that no possible misunderstanding may continue to exist. If the honorable gentleman will but take his pen, he will be able to note my answer:—"The word 'marriage' has been inserted to give the General Legislature the right to decide what form of marriage will be legal in all parts of the Confederation, without in any way interfering with the rules and prescriptions of the Church to which the contracting parties belong." Another honorable gentleman—I think the honorable member for DeLorimier (Hon. Mr. BUREAU)—asked me if the General Government would be responsible for the debts contracted by Canada