

Then the Federal Government will have the right of settling questions of divorce and marriage. With respect to divorce I shall make no remarks, because I think it best that the decision of such questions should be left to the General Government, an exception being made in favor of co-religionists. What shall I say on the subject of marriage—the basis of all our institutions? Is it not dangerous to have it at the mercy of the Federal Government? We shall soon be told probably that it is but a sounding affair, and before long, mayors will take the place of the *curés*, and will celebrate the marriages of their constituents. Our laws which regulate our marriages at present are very important to us, and are based on the Roman law. These are the only laws suitable to Canadians, and the wise provisions characterizing them were the fruit of the experience of several ages. We should not incur the risk of any change in them by a legislature, the majority of whose members do not hold our opinions on this subject. The hon. member (Hon. Sir N. F. BELLEAU) might have favored us with his opinion on this head, but he did not, and I regret that he did not. There is another question deeply interesting to Lower Canada, but it seems that on that neither must we permit ourselves to speak. That question relates to the interest of money. Do we not know that the question of the rate of interest has something to do with our civil laws? Is that also of no importance? An Upper Canada majority has already saddled us with a law abolishing the rate of interest. Free trade in money was not suitable to Lower Canada, and the right of legislating on the question is now sought to be entrusted to the Federal Government. What will be the result? Who will assure us that the law limiting the rate of interest will not be repealed as it respects all cases, and that banks and corporations will not be allowed to exact such rates of interest as they may think fit, as private persons may now. This might become the fate of Lower Canada. Why not allow the local legislatures to regulate the question according to the exigencies and the ideas of communities which they represent, as the same is now fixed and decided in the United States, where the rate of interest varies in the several states? Thus Lower Canada will be prevented from regulating a question which has been decided for us by Upper Canada against

our wishes. I confess that I am surprised at this, because I see in the present Administration men who have done battle at my side on that very question. The local legislatures will have the power of making laws on the subjects of immigration and agriculture; but the Federal Legislature will have the same power, and it is evident that it will have the upper hand on these matters; that the laws of Lower Canada, for instance, may be overridden by means of the veto of the Federal Government. But there is something yet more fraught with danger for us. The Federal Government will have the right of imposing taxes on the provinces without the concurrence of the local governments. Under article five of the 29th resolution, the Federal Government may raise moneys by all modes or systems of taxation, and I look upon this power as most excessive. Thus, in case it should happen, as I said a moment ago, that the Lower Canada Government refused to undertake the payment of the debt contracted for the redemption of the Seigniorial Tenure, the Federal Government would have two methods of compelling it to do so. First, by retaining the amount out of the eighty cents per head indemnity to be accorded to the Local Government, and secondly, by imposing a local and direct tax. The Lieutenant Governor of the Local Government will be appointed by the Federal Government, and will be guided by its instructions. We are not told whether the Local Government will be responsible to the Local Legislature; whether there will be only one or two branches of the Legislature, nor how the Legislative Council will be composed, if there is to be one; we are refused any information whatsoever on these points, which are nevertheless of some importance. I regret, therefore, that the amendment proposed yesterday by the hon. member for Grandville, should have been rejected, since it would have enabled us to obtain important information before voting on the question. I do not see that the reasons advanced yesterday by the Hon. Sir N. F. BELLEAU, to justify the haste with which it is attempted to pass this measure, are legitimate and conclusive. We are told that the present Ministry in England is in favor of this project. For my part I do not think the measure will be adopted without important amendments. Unfortunately the measure will, perhaps, be amended in England in a sense highly prejudicial to Lower Canada in