

Canadians who were opposed to representation by population would agree to the scheme of the Toronto Convention, they were ready to meet them on that ground. Personally, I have always been in favor of a legislative union, where it can be advantageously worked. If it could be adapted to our circumstances in these colonies, I would at this moment be in favor of a legislative union as the best system of government. I believe that is the general opinion of the people in the west. But it is the duty of every public man to shape his course with reference to theoretical principles of government, according to the circumstances which may prevail locally. And it is quite clear that, if the legislative union could not be worked well with Upper and Lower Canada, it would work still worse with the other provinces brought in. There remained, therefore, in my opinion, no other alternative than to adopt the Federal principle, or to dissolve entirely the connection which exists between Upper and Lower Canada at the present moment; and that I would look upon as one of the greatest calamities which could befall these provinces. Even if this scheme were more objectionable than it is, had I the alternative put before me to accept dissolution of the union or to accept this, I would without hesitation accept Confederation rather than dissolution. (Hear, hear.) In the scheme as propounded, we have all that we could possibly demand in the way of representation in the Lower House. And, besides that, we have provision made for extending the representation east or west, as occasion may require, according to the increase of our population shown at the decennial periods for taking the census. Anything fairer than that could not possibly be demanded. And if Lower Canada increases more rapidly in population than Canada West, she will obtain representation accordingly. For, although the number of her members can not be changed from sixty-five, the proportion of that number to the whole will be changed relatively to the progress of the various colonies. On the other hand if we extend, as I have no doubt we will do, westward, towards the centre of the continent, we will obtain a large population for our Confederation in the west. In that quarter we must look for the largest increase of our population in British America, and before many years elapse the centre of population and power will tend westward much farther than most people

now think. The increase in the representation is therefore almost certain to be chiefly in the west, and every year will add to the influence and power of Western Canada, as well as to her trade and commerce. The most important question that arises relates to the constitution of the Upper House. It is said that in this particular the scheme is singularly defective—that there has been a retrograde movement in going back from the elective to the nominative system. I admit that this statement is a fair one from those who contended long for the application of the elective principle to the Upper House; but it can have no weight with another large class, who, like myself, never believed in the wisdom of electing the members of two Houses of Parliament with coördinate powers. I have always believed that a change from the present system was inevitable, even with our present political organization. (Hear, hear.) The constitution of an Upper House or Senate seems to have originated in the state of society which prevailed in feudal times; and from being the sole legislative body—or at least the most powerful—in the State, it has imperceptibly become less powerful, or secondary in importance to the lower chamber, as the mass of the people became more intelligent, and popular rights became more fully understood. Where there is an Upper House it manifestly implies on the part of its members peculiar duties or peculiar rights. In Great Britain, for instance, there is a large class of landed proprietors, who have long held almost all the landed property of the country in their hands, and who have to pay an immense amount of taxes. The fiscal legislation of Britain for many years has tended to the reduction of impost and excise duties on articles of prime necessity, and to the imposition of heavy taxes on landed property and incomes. Under such a financial system, there are immense interests at stake, and the House of Lords being the highest judicial tribunal in the kingdom, there is a combination of peculiar rights and peculiar duties appertaining to the class represented which amply justify its maintenance. We have no such interests, and we impose no such duties, and hence the Upper House becomes a mere court of revision, or one of coördinate jurisdiction; as the latter it is not required; to become the former, it should be constituted differently from the House of Assembly. The United States present the example of a community socially similar to ourselves,