

told that Confederation is become necessary for the defence of the country. For one moment I will admit that it might increase our means of defence, but that is assuredly no reason for urging the adoption of the measure, as now attempted to be done. With Confederation, neither the number of men in the several provinces, nor the pecuniary resources now at their disposal, will be increased. I cannot see what vast increase of strength this Confederation is to give forthwith, for England is fully entitled at this moment to dispose, without let or hindrance, of all the resources, both in men and money, possessed by the colony, just as well as she will be after Confederation is effected. That is therefore no reason to make us urge on the adoption of the measure, especially as we risk nothing by giving the people time to study, examine and understand the new Constitution of which we are desirous to make them a present. They tell us that the Intercolonial Railway is to be a military road. But if it be so, how happens it that nobody has thought of another part of the country in which a military road is much more called for. I can hardly believe that anybody can be serious in this, while they overlook the real military road which would be wanted in the event of hostilities,—I mean a railway between Quebec and Montreal, on the north shore of the River St. Lawrence. In order to render the Intercolonial Railway of any avail as a military road, the North Shore Railway must also be built, for the present road on the south shore may be easily cut and occupied by the enemy. Leaving Quebec it takes the direction of the United States, and leaving Montreal it takes the same direction to meet the other branch at Richmond. In case of war the Americans would have but a short distance to advance to take possession of either one or the other of these branches. I shall now proceed to examine whether the plan of Confederation is really what it seems to be. I hear it said that Confederation, as it is proposed, will be a Federal union—but it seems to me that it will be rather a Legislative union, at least as far as regards the most important interests of Lower Canada. The 29th section of the scheme submitted to us says: "The Federal Parliament shall have the power of making laws for the peace, the well-being, and the good government of the Confederate provinces, and in particular in respect of the following matters." The powers of the Federal Government will be in reality unlimited. The fact of the enumeration of these thirty-seven heads does not in the least

restrain the power of the Federal Government from legislating on everything. The exceptions are few. I would ask the Honorable Premier, for instance, whether the Federal Government has not the power to enact that marriage is a civil contract? He cannot deny it, and I do not believe that that clause will in any way suit Lower Canada. In a matter of divorce, I consider that the power of legislating upon it ought to be vested in the Federal Government; but as to the passing of a marriage act, we have the authority of the past to convince us that Lower Canada will never be satisfied with what is proposed in the plan of Confederation. On a former occasion, when a member of the Parliament of Canada moved to enact that marriage should be made a civil contract, all the members for Lower Canada voted against the motion, and the whole country was opposed to it. I shall also inquire whether the Federal Government will not have the right to enact that religious corporations shall no longer exist in the country, or that they shall not be allowed to hold real property, except what is absolutely necessary for their lodging accommodation. According to the resolutions which have been submitted to us, the Federal Government would certainly have this right. It has been said that article 15 of the 43rd resolution replies to this objection, but I can see nothing in that article which restricts the right of the Federal Government to legislate on this matter. The 43rd resolution defines the powers of the local governments, and article 15 of that resolution declares that they may make laws respecting "property and civil rights, excepting those portions thereof assigned to the General Parliament." That article reserves to the local legislatures nothing relative to religious corporations, and the Federal Government would have full power to decree that those corporations shall not hold immovable property. The supreme power is that which has the right to legislate upon, and regulate the existence of, the corporations in question, and they can only possess civil rights so long as the Government permits them to exist. The same might be said of most of the institutions to which Lower Canada is attached. I am therefore right in saying that, so far as those things which Lower Canada most holds to are concerned, Confederation is in fact a Legislative union, because upon the Federal Government is conferred the right of legislating upon those subjects which Lower Canada holds most dear. It appears to me that it is the more important not to proceed