

of the scheme, without which it would certainly, in my opinion, have been open to very serious objection. (Hear, hear.) I will not now criticize any other of the leading features of the resolutions as they touch the fundamental conditions and principles of the union. I think there has been throughout a most wise and statesmanlike distribution of powers, and at the same time that those things have been carefully guarded which the minorities in the various sections required for their protection, and the regulation of which each province was not unnaturally desirous of retaining for itself. So far then as the objection is concerned of this union being federative merely in its character, and liable to all the difficulties which usually surround federal governments, I think we may fairly consider that there has been a proper and satisfactory distribution of power, which will avert many of those difficulties. (Hear, hear.) But, sir, there is another objection made to it, and one upon which, from my stand-point, I desire to make some observations, and that is with reference to the manner in which the rights of the various minorities in the provinces have been protected. This is unquestionably a grave and serious subject of consideration, and especially so to the minority in this section of the province, that is the English-speaking minority to which I and many other members of this House belong, and with whose interests we are identified. I do not disguise that I have heard very grave and serious apprehensions by many men for whose opinions I have great respect, and whom I admire for the absence of bigotry and narrow-mindedness which they have always exhibited. They have expressed themselves not so much in the way of objection to specific features of the scheme as in the way of apprehension of something dangerous to them in it—apprehensions which they cannot state explicitly or even define to themselves. They seem doubtful and distrustful as to the consequences, express fears as to how it will affect their future condition and interests, and in fact they almost think that in view of this uncertainty it would be better if we remained as we are. Now, sir, I believe that the rights of both minorities—the French minority in the General Legislature and the English-speaking minority in the Local Legislature of Lower Canada—are properly guarded. I would admit at once

that without this protection it would be open to the gravest objection; I would admit that you were embodying in it an element of future difficulty, a cause of future dissension and agitation that might be destructive to the whole fabric; and therefore it is a very grave and anxious question for us to consider—especially the minorities in Lower Canada—how far our mutual rights and interests are respected and guarded, the one in the General and the other in the Local Legislature. With reference to this subject, I think that I, and those with whom I have acted—the English speaking members from Lower Canada—may in some degree congratulate ourselves at having brought about a state of feeling between the two races in this section of the province which has produced some good effect. (Hear, hear.) There has been, ever since the time of the union, I am happy to say—and everybody knows it who has any experience in Lower Canada—a cordial understanding and friendly feeling between the two nationalities, which has produced the happiest results. Belonging to different races and professing a different faith, we live near each other; we come in contact and mix with each other, and we respect each other; we do not trench upon the rights of each other; we have not had those party and religious differences which two races, speaking different languages and holding different religious beliefs, might be supposed to have had; and it is a matter of sincere gratification to us, I say, that this state of things has existed and is now found amongst us. (Hear, hear.) But if, instead of this mutual confidence; if, instead of the English-speaking minority placing trust in the French majority in the Local Legislature, and the French minority placing the same trust in the English majority in the General Legislature, no such feeling existed, how could this scheme of Confederation be made to work successfully? (Hear, hear.) I think it cannot be denied that there is the utmost confidence on both sides; I feel assured that our confidence in the majority in the Local Government will not be misplaced, and I earnestly trust that the confidence they repose in us in the General Legislature will not be abused. (Hear, hear.) I hope that this mutual yielding of confidence will make us both act in a high-minded and sensitive manner when the rights of either side are called in question—if ever they should be called in question—in the respect-