

how many shall Upper Canada have with a larger population? I was in favor of a larger House than one hundred and ninety-four, but was overruled. I was perhaps singular in the opinion, but I thought it would be well to commence with a larger representation in the lower branch. The arguments against this were, that, in the first place, it would cause additional expense; in the next place, that in a new country like this, we could not get a sufficient number of qualified men to be representatives. My reply was that the number is rapidly increasing as we increase in education and wealth; that a larger field would be open to political ambition by having a larger body of representatives; that by having numerous and smaller constituencies, more people would be interested in the working of the union, and that there would be a wider field for selection for leaders of governments and leaders of parties. These are my individual sentiments,—which, perhaps, I have no right to express here—but I was overruled, and we fixed on the number of one hundred and ninety-four, which no one will say is large or extensive, when it is considered that our present number in Canada alone is one hundred and thirty. The difference between one hundred and thirty and one hundred and ninety-four is not great, considering the large increase that will be made to our population when Confederation is carried into effect. While the principle of representation by population is adopted with respect to the popular branch of the legislature, not a single member of the Conference, as I stated before, not a single one of the representatives of the government or of the opposition of any one of the Lower Provinces was in favor of universal suffrage. Every one felt that in this respect the principle of the British Constitution should be carried out, and that classes and property should be represented as well as numbers. Insurmountable difficulties would have presented themselves if we had attempted to settle now the qualification for the elective franchise. We have different laws in each of the colonies fixing the qualification of electors for their own local legislatures; and we therefore adopted a similar clause to that which is contained in the Canada Union Act of 1841, viz., that all the laws which affected the qualification of members and of voters, which affected the appointment and conduct of returning officers and the proceedings at elections, as well as the trial of controverted

elections in the separate provinces, should obtain in the first election to the Confederate Parliament, so that every man who has now a vote in his own province should continue to have a vote in choosing a representative to the first Federal Parliament. And it was left to the Parliament of the Confederation, as one of their first duties, to consider and to settle by an act of their own the qualification for the elective franchise, which would apply to the whole Confederation. In considering the question of the duration of Parliament, we came to the conclusion to recommend a period of five years. I was in favor of a longer period. I thought that the duration of the local legislatures should not be shortened so as to be less than four years, as at present, and that the General Parliament should have as long a duration as that of the United Kingdom. I was willing to have gone to the extent of seven years; but a term of five years was preferred, and we had the example of the New Zealand carefully considered, not only locally, but by the Imperial Parliament, and which gave the provinces of those islands a general parliament with a duration of five years. But it was a matter of little importance whether five years or seven years was the term, the power of dissolution by the Crown having been reserved. I find, on looking at the duration of parliaments since the accession of George III. to the Throne, that excluding the present parliament, there have been seventeen parliaments, the average period of whose existence has been about three years and a half. That average is less than the average duration of the parliaments in Canada since the union, so that it was not a matter of much importance whether we fixed upon five or seven years as the period of duration of our General Parliament. A good deal of misapprehension has arisen from the accidental omission of some words from the 24th resolution. It was thought that by it the local legislatures were to have the power of arranging hereafter, and from time to time of readjusting the different constituencies and settling the size and boundaries of the various electoral districts. The meaning of the resolution is simply this, that for the first General Parliament, the arrangement of constituencies shall be made by the existing local legislatures; that in Canada, for instance, the present Canadian Parliament shall arrange what are to be the constituencies of Upper Canada, and to make such changes as may be necessary in arranging