

name of the Government, that the word marriage, inserted in the project of Confederation, expresses the intention to give to the Federal Parliament the power to declare that marriages contracted in any one of the provinces, according to its laws, should be considered as valid in all the others. Then am I to understand that that part of the Constitution relating to this question will be drafted in the sense expressed in the declaration of the Honorable Solicitor General, and will be restricted to the case mentioned?

HON. SOL. GEN. LANGEVIN—I made, Mr. SPEAKER, the other day, in the name of the Government, the declaration now alluded to by the honorable member for Montmorancy, relative to the question of marriage. The explanation then given by me exactly accords with that which was affixed to it at the Quebec Conference. It is undoubted that the resolutions laid before this honorable House contain in all things only the principles on which the bill or measure respecting Confederation will be based. I can assure the honorable member that the explanations I gave the other evening, relative to the question of marriage, are perfectly exact, and that the Imperial Act relating to it will be drawn up in accordance with the interpretation I put upon it.

HON. MR. DORION—I thought I understood from some one, whom I had reason to consider well informed, that that article was intended to protect mixed marriages.

HON. SOL. GEN. LANGEVIN—In order that I may be better understood by the hon. member, I will read the written declaration which I communicated to the House the other evening. This declaration reads as follows:

The word marriage has been placed in the draft of the proposed Constitution to invest the Federal Parliament with the right of declaring what marriages shall be held and deemed to be valid throughout the whole extent of the Confederacy, without, however, interfering in any particular with the doctrines or rites of the religious creeds to which the contracting parties may belong.

The hon. member for Hochelaga will please to remark that I have been careful in reading this declaration; and in order that no doubt may exist respecting it, I have given to the reporters the very text of the declaration.

HON. MR. DORION—I may have been mistaken; but the question on which I wish to be enlightened by the Hon. Solicitor General for Lower Canada is this: Will a Local Legislature have the right of declaring a mar-

riage between parties not professing the same religious belief invalid?

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—Has not the Legislature of Canada now the power of legislating on that matter, and yet has it ever thought of legislating in that way? (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. CAUCHON—If I understand the explanation of the Hon. Solicitor General for Lower Canada correctly, it will be nothing but the application between the provinces of public international law, namely, that a marriage lawfully contracted in one province should be equally binding in all the others. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. DORION—In that case you have no need of that clause.

HON. MR. CAUCHON—If the principle is just, I do not see what harm there can be in having it written in the Constitution, particularly as it is desired in the provinces, and we, for our part, are interested in knowing that marriages contracted in Lower Canada are valid in all parts of the Confederation. That declaration is satisfactory and reassuring. Some of the speakers, imbued with democratic-republican ideas, have gone so far as to deny one of the most essential and fundamental principles of the British Constitution—that is to say, that the Parliament may change the Constitution without special appeals to the electoral body, and without recourse to popular conventions. It is evident that they wish to lead us towards a social republic, government and legislation in full force. The Roman armies in the days of the decadence of the empire, made and unmade emperors; but it never occurred to them to make laws and administer affairs of state. This had to be reserved to our republicans, who are against Confederation because they desire annexation to the United States, and who raise all kinds of obstacles in order to attain their end. (Hear, hear.) Here there are useless debates provoked in order to kill time; there, petitions covered with false signatures or names obtained under false pretences; and the forlorn hope of democracy, who in the streets threaten with riots and gibbets all who wish for the union of the provinces, and thereby, in its time, constitutional monarchy and parliamentary government. (Hear, hear.) But for those who, like myself, move in another circle of ideas, who have other aspirations, and who are unwilling to accept on any condition their share of a debt of three thousand millions, and of an annual burthen of five hundred mil-