

this demand. Honorable gentlemen who cry "hear! hear!" may find themselves very much disappointed, if, after this portion of the scheme is passed, the local constitutions proposed were quite unsatisfactory. I contend that the local constitutions are as much an essential part of the whole as the general Constitution, and that they both should have been laid at the same time before the House. (Hear, hear.) We ought, besides, to have a clear statement of what are the liabilities specially assigned to Upper and Lower Canada. (Hear, hear.) It is well that Upper Canada should know if she has to pay the indebtedness of Port Hope, Cobourg, Brockville, Niagara, and other municipalities which have borrowed from the municipal loan fund, and what these liabilities are; and it is important for Lower Canada to be told what are the amounts they will be required to tax themselves for. We ought, besides, to obtain some kind of information upon the subject of the Intercolonial Railway, what is the proposed cost, and what route is to be followed; and before these facts are before the House, we ought not to take it upon ourselves to legislate on the subject. Still further, the people of the country do not understand the scheme. (Hear, hear.) Many members of this House, before hearing the explanations which have been offered, were, and others are still, in doubt as to the bearing of many of these resolutions. In the Upper House doubts were expressed as to who should recommend the appointment of the members composing the Legislative Council. It was thought in many quarters that the appointment of these members was to be made by the local governments after the scheme should come into operation. But this it seems is a mistake. There are many other matters with which we are unacquainted, particularly as regards the assets and liabilities. There is a provision that the nomination of the judges of the superior courts shall be vested in the General Government, but it would seem that the constitution of the courts is to be left to the local governments; and I put the question, What does this mean? Do you mean that the local governments are to establish as many courts as they please, declare of how many judges they will be composed, and that the General Government will have to pay for them? Is a local government to say, here is a court with three judges; we want five, and those five must be appointed and paid by the General Government? I have received no answer to this and to several other questions. I can

well understand what is meant by the regulation of the law of divorce; but what is meant by the regulation of the marriage question? Is the General Government to be at liberty to set aside all that we have been in the habit of doing in Lower Canada in this respect? Will the General Government have the power to determine the degree of relationship and the age beyond which parties may marry, as well as the consent which will be required to make a marriage valid? (Hear, hear.) Will all these questions be left to the General Government? If so, it will have the power to upset one of the most important portions of our civil code, and one affecting more than any other all classes of society. The adoption, for instance, of the English rule, whereby females at the age of twelve, and males at the age of fourteen, can contract a valid marriage without the consent of parents, tutors or guardians, would be looked to by the mass of the people of Lower Canada as a most objectionable innovation in our laws, as would also any provision to allow such marriages to take place before any common magistrate without any formality whatsoever. (Hear, hear.) Yet is there no danger that such measures might be carried, when you see the different feelings existing on these questions among the people of the different provinces? There is another question to which I must refer before closing. It is said that the division of the debt is a fair one. We have given, say the Government, \$25 of debt to each inhabitant—that is, in those provinces where it was less, they have increased it to that amount, charging it to the Confederation, and thereby they have made a present to the several provinces of the difference between their present indebtedness and the \$25 per head. (Laughter.) This \$25 per head, when compared to the debt of England, is a heavier burthen upon our own people than the Imperial debt upon the people of England, taking into consideration the greater wealth per individual in England and the fact that the greater part of that debt bears three per cent. interest. (Hear, hear.) There is another aspect in which this question of debt is to be considered. To equalize it, the Conference have increased it on the basis of the present population for the several provinces. This is fair enough at present, supposing that each province contribute the same proportion to the general revenue, and would continue to be so if their population progressed in the same ratio of increase; but, from the natural advantages of Upper and Lower