

extended by the House, I have to say that I do not rise to make a long speech, but that I shall content myself with giving a silent vote. However, before recording my vote upon the measure which is submitted to us, I wish to put a question to the Government. I acknowledge that if I confined myself to consulting my own ideas, I should not put this question; but I do so in order to meet the wishes of several of my friends, both within this House and beyond its precincts. Those friends have expressed alarm in relation to one of the clauses of the resolutions, and have requested me to ask an explanation from the Hon. Attorney General for Upper Canada, as to the interpretation of that clause. I have therefore to ask him whether article 46 of the resolutions, which states that "both the English and French languages may be employed in the General Parliament and in its proceedings, and in the Local Legislature of Lower Canada," is to be interpreted as placing the use of the two languages on an equal footing in the Federal Parliament? In stating the apprehensions entertained by certain persons on this subject—and I consider that it is a mark of patriotism on their part, and that their apprehensions may be legitimate—I hope the Government will not impute to me any hostile intention, and will perceive that the course I adopt is in their interest, as it will give them an opportunity of dissipating the apprehensions in question (Hear, hear.)

HON. ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—I have very great pleasure in answering the question put to me by my hon. friend from the county of Quebec. I may state that the meaning of one of the resolutions adopted by the Conference is this, that the rights of the French-Canadian members as to the status of their language in the Federal Legislature shall be precisely the same as they now are in the present Legislature of Canada in every possible respect. I have still further pleasure in stating that the moment this was mentioned in Conference, the members of the deputation from the Lower Provinces unanimously stated that it was right and just, and without one dissentient voice gave their adhesion to the reasonableness of the proposition that the status of the French language, as regards the procedure in Parliament, the printing of measures, and everything of that kind, should be precisely the same as it is in this Legislature. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. DORION—I do not rise to

offer any lengthened remarks, but to draw for a moment the attention of the members of the Administration, with a view to obtain some information in connection with this scheme; but before doing so, I would say a word in reply to the explanation given by the Hon. Attorney General West to the question put by the hon. member for the county of Quebec (Hon. Mr. EVANTUREL), with regard to the use of the French language. The Hon. Attorney General West stated that the intention of delegates at the Quebec Conference was to give the same guarantees for the use of the French language in the Federal Legislature, as now existed under the present union. I conceive, sir, that this is no guarantee whatsoever, for in the Union Act it was provided that the English language alone should be used in Parliament, and the French language was entirely prohibited; but this provision was subsequently repealed by the 11th and 12th Victoria, and the matter left to the discretion of the Legislature. So that if, to-morrow, this Legislature choose to vote that no other but the English language should be used in our proceedings, it might do so, and thereby forbid the use of the French language. There is, therefore, no guarantee for the continuance of the use of the language of the majority of the people of Lower Canada, but the will and the forbearance of the majority. And as the number of French members in the General Legislature, under the proposed Confederation, will be proportionately much smaller than it is in the present Legislature, this ought to make hon. members consider what little chance there is for the continued use of their language in the Federal Legislature. This is the only observation I have to make on this subject, and it was suggested to me by the answer of the Hon. Attorney General West.

HON. ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—I desire to say that I agree with my hon. friend that as it stands just now the majority governs; but in order to cure this, it was agreed at the Conference to embody the provision in the Imperial Act. (Hear, hear.) This was proposed by the Canadian Government, for fear an accident might arise subsequently, and it was assented to by the deputation from each province that the use of the French language should form one of the principles on upon which the Confederation should be established, and that its use, as at present, should be guaranteed by the Imperial Act. (Hear hear.)