

for two or three years past. I do not believe that they desire a change in the constitution, or that they are willing to have their rights transferred to any quarter. We have had during the present session, petitions from every part of the province, praying that the house will not sanction a scheme of union without a reference to the people at the polls—that tribunal alone having the power to change our constitution, and the hon. member who has addressed the house himself presented petitions to that effect within a few hours. Such petitions have come from my constituents and I will not be a traitor to their rights and feelings by consenting to such a change as is proposed. I consider that there is another difficulty in this case: the Quebec scheme was entered into by several parties, they all concurred in its ratification, and must all be applied to in its abrogation. It is not in the power of the government to say yes or no to the demand which has been made,—they may express their individual views but it is not in their power to cancel and destroy that scheme. I feel that no action should be taken on this question until the people have passed upon it and until then I will not go even with the proposition made by the hon. member for Richmond.

Mr. MILLER:—The hon. member for Halifax in the course of his speech threw out some insinuations which I can safely regard with contempt. There is not a man in the House from whom I should be more willing to receive such insinuations. He says I am acting inconsistently in attempting now to pass a scheme of union without an appeal to the people,—I omitted accidentally to refer to that subject in course of my remarks, when I explain my position in that respect my reasons will I think be satisfactory to the country, but it is not under the influence of such innuendoes and taunts as have been thrown out by that hon. member that I will be induced to express my views,—that is a matter of courtesy and he has placed himself beyond the bounds of courtesy by the remarks which he has made.

Mr. ARCHIBALD:—I trust we will not approach a question of so grave a character with any exhibition of temper, and while I am not surprised at the feelings of the gentleman who has just spoken, I deprecate such expressions upon this occasion. I will say in reference to some observations that have been made, that it is going too far to speak of the Quebec scheme being abandoned. I was not surprised when the Prov. Sec. rose and stated that he was not in a position to give an answer to the question because he can hardly be said to represent even Nova Scotia, for he was but one of those who represented this Province.—It is not very agreeable to gentlemen interested in the Quebec scheme to hear the allusions that have been made; I am prepared to advocate that scheme as conferring upon these Provinces everything that they should ask. At the same time, no one would be more pleased than I if further concessions could be obtained; but any such concession must be obtained at the expense of some other Province. I agree with the hon. member for Richmond that no new scheme would place us in a worse position. The reticence with which the Prov. Sec. approached the question was due to the gentlemen, in this

country and beyond, who were connected with the formation of the present scheme of union.

Mr. TOBIN: I was greatly astonished on coming into the House to hear the hon. member for Richmond addressing the House on this subject. I would not do anything distasteful to the great body of the people; and until proper consultation is had, I think the discussion out of place.

Mr. LOCKE: We sometimes read of villages while in a state of apparent security, being overturned and overwhelmed by an avalanche. But the surprise of persons in that situation could not be greater than that of some gentlemen with whom I sit at what has occurred. It was astonishing to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Richmond, who, though he always favored a union of some sort, was an uncompromising opponent of the Quebec scheme; but how much more so to hear the expressions of the hon. member for Inverness, Mr. McDonnell, who was an uncompromising opponent of any species of union.

The discussion then ceased.

#### PETITIONS.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL presented petitions signed by the representatives of three mining Companies in reference to the extension of mining leases. They were referred to the Committee.

Mr. ROSS presented a petition signed by 49 inhabitants of Victoria County against Confederation.

Also a petition of 41 inhabitants of Baddeck on the same subject.

Also another petition, on the same subject, to which he said considerable importance should be attached, as it was signed by the Custos and all the magistrates, of every political party, who attended the last Sessions of Victoria County.

Mr. ANNAND presented two petitions from Inverness against Confederation.

#### MILITIA UNIFORMS.

Hon. ATT'Y GEN. laid on the table correspondence relating to uniforms for the Militia.

Hon. PROV. SEC. said that no doubt great inconvenience was caused by drawing 50,000 of the inhabitants of the Province annually for five days from their ordinary pursuits, but it was necessary for placing the country in a proper attitude of defence. Nothing would more fully tend to impart a martial spirit to our local forces than a uniform of some description. He trusted that some means could be devised by the committee, for providing a cheap uniform for the Militia.

The papers were referred to the Militia Committee.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. ARCHIBALD introduced a bill to amend the law relating to County Assessments.

Hon. ATTORNEY GENERAL suggested in view of the importance of the subject, that the bill be referred to a select Committee.

Mr. ARCHIBALD consented to do so, and the bill was read a second time.

Mr. SHANNON presented a petition from the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance in favour of the establishment of an Asylum for Inebriates, and urged the desirability of favorably considering the prayer thereof.

Mr. BLACKWOOD presented a petition from D. Fraser and 500 others, of Tatamagouche, in