

regret that the late Government took with such avidity and adopted the Canadian views, without having come to this House and asked the appointment of the delegation. I think if this had been done, from my knowledge of the position they held in the estimation of the Imperial Government, although they ran round from place to place on a regular spring and autumn tour, yet they would have been met by nothing more than a Resolution of want of Confidence. The Constitution of a country cannot be changed except by the consent of the people, or by the employment of force. In matters that did not contemplate the annihilation of the Constitution, it would have been legitimate to appoint a delegation; but to discuss the Constitution under which they were acting was unconstitutional. If they had come to this House and asked for a delegation, they would have been met by a vote of want of confidence, and we should have had an incoming Government who would have appointed a delegation which would have represented the true ideas of the people, instead of a delegation which represented the views and feelings of the late Government only. In the late election in my County the question stood on that of Confederation; although they felt the do-nothing policy of the Government they would not make the election turn on any thing but Confederation or non-Confederation. I say this Scheme, as far as I have looked into it, is a one-sided Scheme; a Scheme by which the interests of Canada would be promoted to our detriment; a Scheme for the legislation of British North America which would be entirely Westward, a territory immense when compared with ours. The preponderance in ten years would be largely in favor of Western Canada. This we know, and if it contemplated to open up their canals, and populate that great country west of Lake Superior, that would increase the population greater than ever. The great influence then would be centred in Western Canada, and the power would be all in the their hands. Those delegates who visited us said we have the population element, and the agricultural element, we want your maritime element. If they valued our maritime element, why did they not leave the seat of Government to be settled afterwards? Why did they not appoint St. John or Halifax as the place where the archives of a great people should be deposited, where ships of war could come and protect them? Why did they place it at Ottawa, on the head waters of a river far in the interior? I look upon the choice of the seat of Government as one of vast importance, as of great importance as when they took the capital from Ireland to England, from which influences grew up to the detriment and destruction of Ireland. Our population and our capital would all go to Canada, and we should become the hewers of wood and drawers of water to them. How much do they value our maritime element? They give us fifteen members out of 194, according to population. Now the question of representation by population is a debatable one. We have a great country, with a noble river running through it, one of the finest in the world, with a great extent of sea board, and a territory larger than that of Great Britain. Why did not the delegates urge our importance upon them? Suppose this principle were applied to the kingdom of Scotland, as compared to the City of London, with her great natural beauties, her mountains, her valleys and lakes and mines, would the people

have submitted to it for a moment? Would it not be unjust that a whole country should have a less representation than a City, merely because her population was less? And shall we be neutralised and equalized by the Cities of Montreal and Quebec. These Cities have as great a population as all New Brunswick. There is one thing that requires explanation, and that is, why the Conference carried on their deliberations in secret conclave; the hon. President of the Council has very ably referred to this. It is not constitutional. Look at the history of the United States, and the discussion on the framing of their Constitution.

Mr. McMILLAN.—Will the hon. member say that when they were framing the constitution of the United States that they discussed it openly?

Mr. GILBERT.—There might have been some preliminaries that were attended to in secret, but it was openly debated, but of this Conference at Quebec we are not able to get the opinions of the men who framed the Scheme; we are shut out from asking the delegates, for they are not now in the House, and they were afraid to bring the matter before the late House. On Section 71, we require some information. It reads thus, "That Her Majesty the Queen be solicited to determine the rank and name of the Federated Provinces." What does that mean? Was not the idea that we should still be a Colony depending on England? Did they intend to establish a Viceroy here with all the pomp and circumstance of Royalty? Would any man vote for that? Let us not copy after antiquated Europe; let us copy anything that is beneficial; but for Heaven's sake not the antiquated forms that do no good. Imagine the hon. ex-Surveyor General, on bended knee kissing the booby hand of a Viceroy; he would have no objection to kiss a lady's hand, that would be nice enough, but I do not think he would be willing to try the other. I think these Colonies have a mark to make in History, when they become able to fly their own flag, but that time has not yet arrived. We even now can compare with almost any country save England, France, the United States and perhaps Russia in our commercial importance as owners of tonnage, and if we had it all within the borders of our own Province it would be all right; but with a line to defend from the farther Cape of Newfoundland to the head waters of Lake Superior, and a population sparse and scattered along the whole of this line, numbering only some four millions, it would be folly to think of hoisting our own flag and striving to guide the ship of State. Does any one suppose that a House of 194 members at Ottawa would put up with dictation from Downing Street? Look at our own House with only 41 members; we will not submit to their dictation in anything that we think is injurious to our interests; and would the united Colonies long remain attached to the mother country? They would not; we should soon all be "gobbled up" by the neighbouring republic, and I am not prepared as a descendant of the old refugees, with the blood of the Loyalists in my veins, to be annexed to the United States. And when the time comes for us to go off by ourselves, will this one-sided Scheme be the one to be adopted? No; it will be one that is fair in every respect. We shall then have a population of some fifteen millions, and then we may heave the anchor, hoist the sails and steer the ship of State without fear of breakers. If this question had not been decided as it has been, the consequences would have been

most disastrous. The hon. member has referred to the Upper House of twenty-four members being able to put a veto upon anything that might prove disadvantageous. But it is well known that the Upper House cannot always hold out against the people's House; this has been proved in the House of Lords in England, and at last they must yield. Our very best rights would be jeopardized, and if we have no local rights then why should we keep up a local Parliament here, and another in Nova Scotia? We have heard of delegations proceeding from Canada, as the most influential of the British North American Colonies, to make known the state of the Provinces, and it seems they wish to bring to bear the powerful influence of England, to force us to this Union. They doubtless intend to press the Scheme, and leave room for us to come in afterwards. I think the Government very wise in bringing in their resolutions, for although they come from an independent member, yet I presume from the remarks of the Hon. President of the Council that the Government sanction it. This is something practical, and although I am opposed to delegations as a general thing, this one under the circumstances has my support, and I think the Government will act wisely and well in sending our best men to "frustrate their knavish tricks."

Mr. McCLELLAN.—The hon. member (Mr. Gilbert) says something about frustrating their knavish tricks, and further says that he has Loyalist blood in his veins; I think the difference between him and his good old ancestors is, that whereas they suffered because they stood by the British Government, their descendant will not. With regard to this question, I am only anxious that the people should have a full and clear statement laid before them. The Hon. President of the Council, previous to the elections, travelled round through our part of the country expounding his views; I had no time to reply to him then, and therefore it will be expected that I should do so now in reply to his speech of yesterday. The Hon. President of the Council said our delegation should have gone to the Conference, and returned without pledging themselves to any Scheme.

Hon. Mr. SMITH.—I said that it was unprecedented that a constitution should be changed without being submitted to the people.

Mr. McCLELLAN.—Now I do not know what our constitution really is; I thought we had always been under the British Government and Constitution, and I cannot see how the fact of the delegates going to Quebec to confer with regard to the management of our local Government can affect the constitution at all. It was all right they admit to go to Charlotte-town for this purpose, and why then could they not extend their operations. Since this Province has been under a separate Government there have been a good many delegations on different subjects, some on a Union of the Colonies, some on Railways, to one of which the Hon. President of the Council belonged, and I think then the question of Union was discussed; at any rate I think I can show from the Journals that the question has been discussed. Nearly all these delegates went without the knowledge of the people or consent of the House, and this is a good precedent. But the delegates to Quebec had authority.

Hon. Mr. BOTSFOORD.—Sir R. G. MacDonnell says they had not, and Mr. Cardwell agrees with him.