

Mr BLANCHARD said that if the hon member would come down to his county next summer, he would show him more fish than the Americans could catch. It was an exploded idea that the Americans drew off the fish by feeding them. He believed that our own vessels caught as much fish as the same number of American vessels that came into our bays. One sudden gale of wind, he knew, did more damage to the fisheries, did more to drive them off, than any system pursued by the Americans.

Hon. Prov. Sec. said that no one could presume to say that it was not of the most vital consequence to the interests of the Province that our fishing grounds should be protected, and that we should exclude from them the American fishermen, unless we received from them such concessions as would be equivalent to the privileges they would obtain. He contended that the present position of the fisheries arose altogether from the disunion of the Provinces. As it was now, the voice of the Legislature was unable to influence Provinces which were not now bound to us by those social, political and commercial ties that would exist when British America was one Confederacy, animated by a common sympathy and interest. When gentlemen who now so forcibly expressed their views in reference to the fisheries were able to make themselves heard in a Confederate Parliament, no doubt their voice would have the effect it ought to have. The papers on the table proved conclusively that the Canadian Government was fully alive to the great value of these fishery grounds, and of the indisputable right of British America to enjoy them exclusively. So far as the policy of Canada went, it was to modify the proposal of the Imperial Government. The course pursued by the Government of this Province, he was glad to find, was heartily approved by gentlemen opposite.

Mr. Ross said that it was well known to the members from Cape Breton that from Cape North to Scatarie there was hardly a creek or harbour where valuable fisheries did not exist. During the year 1855 American vessels got fares off the harbor of Sydney, and indeed within it. He only called attention to this fact for the purpose of correcting a misapprehension of the hon member for Inverness.

The papers presented by the Provincial Secretary were then referred to the Committee on the Fisheries.

THE LOCAL CONSTITUTION.

Hon. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY then asked permission to introduce an Act to amend Chapter 3 R. S., "of the duration of and representation in the General Assembly." He

explained that in consequence of the great change which was about being made in the government of British America, a very large portion of the duties which had hitherto devolved upon the Local Legislature of this Province would be transferred to the Parliament of the "Dominion of Canada." Under these circumstances it was necessary to remodel our local constitution, and accordingly in the present act it was proposed to diminish the number of representatives in the House of Assembly. It was proposed to give each county in the Province two members. To Pictou and Halifax respectfully, however, there would be given an additional member, in consequence of their large population compared with other counties. Of course it would be at once apparent that the bill did not provide an equal representation according to population for the several counties. The government of which he was a member had in 1859 introduced a bill—which was now law—by which the representation was placed on a far more equable basis than it had ever been before, but, nevertheless, some considerable inequalities still remained. Such inequalities, however, existed in all countries, but nowhere less than in Nova Scotia. It did not seem practicable to reduce the representation from two members to a single one for the smallest counties. It was deemed most advisable to place every county on the same footing, with the exception of those two counties, whose population was so largely in excess of that of the others. As respects the Legislative Council, it was proposed to ask the house to agree to a resolution requesting the Crown to reduce the number of that body to 18 or 19 members: that is to say, one for every county, and one additional for the metropolitan county, if it should be deemed advisable. The House would see that henceforth the electors of the Province would possess larger electoral powers than ever before. They would have to elect two members for the Local Legislature, and one for the General Parliament, except, of course, in Halifax and Pictou, to which additional members were given; but in no case would the number of votes given at the poll be less than three. He believed that the policy proposed would recommend itself to the intelligence of the house and country.

Mr. S. CAMPBELL said that the introduction of the bill was tantamount to a declaration that Confederation was finally passed in Parliament. Under these circumstances he thought it was the duty of every member of the house on both sides to give his