

commended itself to the judgment, not only of the friends of union, but even of those who having opposed Confederation felt they owed it to the country to adapt the legislation to the existing state of affairs.

Mr. LOCKE said he supposed that any arguments urged against the bill would be futile, but he felt bound to object to the manner in which the bill was brought forward. The Prov. Sec. had almost assumed the position of an autocrat. It was true that the matter would be open to future legislation even if the bill passed, but the Legislative Council might interfere against any such attempt, and whether or not, the incoming Parliament should not be put in the position of being obliged to reverse the action previously taken. He attacked the bill on the ground that it was an interference with the rights of the people, and he believed that this would be the opinion of the country. It should be remembered that the Local Legislature might require to protect the local interests against the encroachments of the General Parliament, and in that case a House of thirty-eight would have comparatively small weight. At any rate the people themselves should deal with the question.

Hon. ATTY. GENERAL said he had felt that if the present Parliament ceased its functions without arranging the local constitution it would fail in an important part of its duty. He had pressed this view on his colleagues for several reasons, one of which was that the whole scheme of union would be frustrated and left imperfect if such a change were not made. In order to give efficiency to the scheme of Confederation every portion of it should be carried out. If members were able to show that the principle of the bill was wrong or that any county had been neglected their position could be appreciated, but he could not value the statement that this, the most appropriate time for action, should be allowed to pass and a future period selected. He could easily imagine the storm of objection that would have been raised had the government failed to bring this measure forward before the elections were held. It would be said, "these gentlemen went to Canada and framed a scheme, afterwards going to England to mature it, and were unable subsequently to carry out one of its most important provisions." The government would therefore be wanting in the discharge of their duty if they did not press this matter upon the attention of the House and they would have been open to the charge of deception in leading the people to suppose that a large

reduction would be made in the legislative expenses and then in failing to make that reduction when the opportunity arrived. The only question remaining was whether the whole number of representatives and the distribution of the seats was commendable, and as these points had not been challenged he would ask only was it wrong to do then what might be done twelve months afterwards?

Mr. KILLAM approved of the principle, laid down by the Provincial Secretary, that the House should make the best of the situation of affairs; but he entirely disagreed with the last speaker as to this being the proper time to pass such a measure; nor did he believe that it would interfere with the arrangements of Confederation to leave the House with its present complement. He did not see on what principle the distribution of seats was founded. The bill would make a most important change in obliging candidates to run their election over the whole county, instead of being elected for ridings, as at present. The difficulty of this plan would appear when such a county as Halifax was taken into consideration. This was contrary to the Canadian principle, which gave to every district its representative; and he read from an English authority to show that district representation was the only mode of securing the representation of minorities. The same objection, he thought, did not apply to the election of members for the General Parliament, because the representatives would go there as Nova Scotians, and without any sectional feeling. The bill, he thought, would in fact disfranchise some of the districts, because a political feeling which might prevail in one section would be controlled by the feeling in another section. In New Brunswick the policy had been to retain the whole Legislature and he thought Nova Scotia would require all the talent of which she could avail herself to remodel her constitution. The local Parliament would have important matters to deal with; it was not improbable that our most able men would leave the House, and there would be a better selection to be made out of 55 members than out of 38. It was well known that a great deal of influence was brought to bear by departmental officers who had seats in Parliament; that was a reason why the number of members should be large. The object of the measure, he believed, was to crush Nova Scotia down and repress her influence. Another view of the matter was that the general Parliament might at some period re-