

But in 1848, with a change of government, it became necessary to carry through Parliament a measure or measures to which it was well known that a large majority of this Upper House were decidedly opposed. There had to be some talking about a swamping of the House—a similar step to what was threatened once in the constitutional history of Great Britain. It was not really done. It did not need to be done, or at least, it only needed to be done in part; the peculiarity of the position of honorable gentlemen, and the impossibility of their standing out beyond a certain point, made it unnecessary to carry out the threat to extremity. But it was carried far enough to destroy their self-respect, and the respect of the public for them. It was felt that they had no sufficient *status* in the country; they sank in public opinion, and sank and sank until every one quietly acquiesced in the change which was afterwards made in the Constitution of the Council. (Hear, hear.) I do not overstate the truth when I say that the Legislative Council so sank in public opinion, because there was no machinery by which public opinion could act upon it, except that of a further creation of councillors by the Crown, and there being no other way of averting a dead-lock, they had to be made to feel that in case of extremity their power would not be found equal to their will.

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—That is because the number was unlimited.

MR. DUNKIN—If the Crown had not been able to increase the number, those honorable gentlemen might have stood out against the popular demand, until a revolution had swept them away, or they might have shrunk before the fear of it; as it was, they gave way under a milder pressure. (Hear, hear.)

HON. ATTY. GEN. CARTIER—There is a central power in all things. There is a centrifugal force and a centripetal force. Too much of either is dangerous, and what is true in the physical world, is true also in the political world.

MR. DUNKIN—Certainly. But I do not see that that has much to do with the remarks I am just now offering. (Hear, hear.) I say the elective Legislative Council was rendered necessary, in the opinion of the country, by this unfortunate state of things, even though the system then in existence was not so bad as the system now offered for our acceptance. There was then the power constitutionally given to the Crown to augment the numbers of the Legislative Council, so that the

gentlemen constituting that body could recede before the determined expression of the public will, as gracefully as did the House of Lords on the memorable occasion I have already alluded to. Had that House not yielded in those days of the Reform Bill, even the Crown of Great Britain might not have escaped the consequences of a bloody revolution. That House might have been constitutionally omnipotent, but its physical was not equal to its constitutional capacity. What is it that is proposed to be given to us here? A body not at all weighty in the influence of its members, and which, it is said, will have to shrink from the exercise of its prerogatives. I do not know whether it will or not. But I had rather not give to a body of men limited in number—though even so little weighty in the community—an absolute veto on all legislation, for so long as the Almighty may be pleased to continue them in life. I think a much better system could be devised—nay, I am sure of it. At all events, here is this proposed body, which, we are told, is to be Federal, but which is not to be so. We are told it is to be a constitutional check, but it is not to be that either. It is rather, I take it, a cleverly devised piece of dead-lock machinery, and the best excuse made for it is, that it will not be strong enough to do near all the harm it seems meant to do. Her Majesty's Government condemns it. It may not be necessary that we should say with very marked emphasis how we join in that condemnation. (Hear, hear.) I have then shewn, I think, Mr. SPEAKER, as regards our House of Commons, that we have not reached perfection; and that, as regards our House of Lords, we have not come near it. I pass on to the Executive. Here, too, there is to be a very wide difference between our proposed system and that of the United States. To begin, they have an elective president, chosen for a short term; with all the evils, therefore, of frequent presidential elections, aggravated by the president's allowed capacity for reelection. No doubt, we avoid these; our Viceroy, or Governor General, is not to be elective. Nobody proposes that—I do not think anybody ever did propose it. And the authors of this project have, therefore, no great right to take credit for this, any more than for their unasked offer to continue Her Most Gracious Majesty upon the throne, or in other words, create her Queen of British North America, by the grace of the Quebec Conference! (Laughter.) This, however, Mr. SPEAKER, by the way. What is more im-