

Was this a time, he would ask, to force an obnoxious measure upon the people of this country—a time, if we could believe the opinions of gentlemen opposite—when danger is threatened—and it was therefore of more than ordinary importance that the affection and confidence of the people should be reposed in the Government of the day. Let us then encourage these feelings—let us have willing hearts as well as hands to defend us, and although our numbers may be few—and the danger great—he believed that there was sufficient courage, energy and spirit in the people of this country to sustain them in the hour of need.

Mr. BLANCHARD did not intend to have addressed the House, but the question having assumed such proportions, he felt it his duty to offer a few observations. This question of assessment for the support of schools was by no means a new one. Upon looking back to the Journals of 1836, he found that the subject was debated in the House and the following resolutions were then moved:—

“Whereas the principle of assessment is the only permanent foundation for the common school education of the country, and as this principle is the leading feature of the measure now under consideration and the details may be modified and improved,—

“Resolved, therefore, that the bill entitled an act for the better encouragement of education be referred to a select committee with instructions to consider the same, and report thereon at a future day.

“For the motion thirty-seven against it nine.”

The men whose names he found recorded in favor of that resolution he had been accustomed from his boyhood to look up to with respect and esteem; and when that resolution was carried it met with his hearty approval. From his earliest recollections, he had been educated in the belief that the principle of assessment was the only correct one; and in supporting it now he certainly could not be suspected of being a slave to the Government. He was sorry that he was compelled to differ from those for whose opinions he had always entertained the highest respect; but he felt that he would be recreant to the duty he owed to the country, and to the opinions he always entertained, if he voted for the resolution of the hon. member for Shelburne. He was not disposed now to enter into an argument to prove that assessment was the true principle. This had been proved so often that it was unnecessary. When this principle was introduced into the bill of last year, he told the hon. Prov. Sec. that if it was founded upon the proper basis, he would give his assistance in carrying it out. He thought that the time had come when the principle should be fairly tried, and he now felt that if he voted for the resolution before the house, he would be taking a step in a backward direction. At the same time, he must not be understood as giving his entire approval to the whole bill,—there were many objectionable features in it, which he had done his best to remove. For instance, the construction of the Council of Public Instruction was particularly obnoxious to him; but this feature he could not object to. He did not support it with a view of assisting the Government, but because he felt it was the only sound basis upon which the common school system of the country should rest.

Mr. BLACKWOOD said that there were many

clauses of this bill exceedingly objectionable to him, and none more so than the mode in which the Council of Public Instruction was constituted. He should have been very glad if that had been re-considered, or at all events remodelled, so as to remove some of its objectionable features. But, as regards the feature of the bill now under consideration, he felt called upon to sustain it, for he was convinced that, when properly carried out, it was the only proper basis upon which the common school system of the country should rest. He was sorry that he was obliged to differ with his friend the member for Shelburne; but he could not consistently vote for his motion without acting contrary to the opinions he had always entertained. He did not support the measure with the view of assisting the Government—for he would scorn to bolster up any Government by supporting them in carrying out what he did not believe was for the interests of the whole country. He wished, then, in giving his vote for the measure, to put himself right before the house and his constituents—and to let them understand that, in the course he was taking, he was not sustaining a Government—but a principle, which he believed was calculated to benefit the cause of education.

Mr. JOST had already stated that he was opposed to the principle of compulsory taxation. He wished the matter to be left in the hands of the people.

Mr. BILL said that the house was aware that he had presented petitions signed by many hundreds of persons against assessment for the support of schools. It was a system that looked very well upon paper, but it was not so easy to carry it out. When he made up his mind to vote for assessment, he was at the same time determined to vote for separate schools, for he did not think it just to have the one without the other. He regretted very much that he felt it his duty to support the resolution.

Mr. KILLAM said that it was evident that the system of county assessment proposed by the bill would not give the amount required for the support of the schools—and they would have to raise the balance by subscriptions from the people. He objected in committee to the principle upon which the bill distributes the public money, and he should vote for the resolution before the house.

A call of the house was had.

Mr. C. J. CAMPBELL said that it was clearly understood when this bill was sent to committee that no one was committed to the principle. He was glad it was not going to be made a party question, as it left it open to the supporters of the Government to take an independent course. He agreed with the member for Kings, that, if they had direct taxation, they must have separate schools. He thought, if they were going to have free schools, the better plan would be to appropriate the surplus revenue in the Provincial chest for their support, and, if that was not enough, he did not think the people would object to an increase of the ad valorem duties.

Mr. ROSS, in reference to a statement made on a previous evening by the Provincial Secretary, that there were 62 schools in operation in Victoria county, said that he was not in a position to contradict him then, but he had telegraphed down to the county, and had received an answer that there were only 27.

Hon. PRO. SECY. said that his information