

respect to it, and that hence there are no petitions or demonstrations against it. I think this is a mode of reasoning which my hon. friend (Hon. Mr. CURRIE) ought not to adopt—it is an argument unworthy of his intelligence. (Hear, hear.) My hon. friend from Wellington the other day attacked the character of the Conference, and the attack has been repeated since, by styling it a “self-elected body.” This designation was not correct. So far as Canada is concerned, we were represented by the Canadian Government, formed for the express purpose of carrying into effect a plan of Federal union—union of the Canadas at all events, and if possible of all the British North American Provinces. It will not be denied that the Government possesses the confidence of large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, and of the people of the province. (Hear, hear.) The representatives of Canada, therefore, could hardly be called a self-elected body, that is in the sense in which my hon. friend has applied the term, namely, that they represented nobody but themselves. To maintain this is indeed to go a great length, for it is practically to ignore both Houses of Parliament, and the very principle of representation. (Hear, hear.) Then, as regards the representatives of the other provinces, they were appointed by the sanction of the Crown, on the invitation of the Governor General, and were selected from various political parties, to consider a question of the utmost interest to every subject of the Sovereign, of whatever race or faith, resident in these provinces; and they have arrived at a conclusion destined to exercise a most important influence upon the future condition and welfare of the whole community. My honorable friend from Port Hope (Hon. Mr. SKYMOUR) referred to-day to the American mode of revising their constitutions. The honorable gentleman very correctly stated the manner in which the Federal Constitution may be amended, but he is in error as to the mode in which state constitutions may be revised. One of the most important of the States revised its Constitution in 1846. I refer to the State of New York. The *modus operandi* on that occasion was as follows:—An act was passed in the State Legislature authorizing the electors at large to choose delegates to a convention, for the express purpose of revising the Constitution. The instrument passed by the convention was then submit-

ted to the Legislature for approval; but the Legislature had no power to alter it. It had either to be rejected or accepted as a whole. It was so accepted, none of the details being altered. My hon. friend will see that while the Conference was composed of leading representatives of the people in the various provinces, those conventions are composed of gentlemen elected by the people for that special purpose; and that the only difference between them is in the mode of selection. However, in both cases, all political parties are represented. My hon. friend from the Home Division (Hon. Mr. AIKINS) in speaking of this Conference the other day, said he would have preferred if it had been a party matter, and he took the ground that if it had, it would have been better for the country.

HON. MR. AIKINS—I beg the honorable gentleman's pardon. What I said was, that I regretted very much that the measure had not been taken up and discussed as a party measure; for although I was of opinion that it could not be carried as a party measure, if it had been so taken up it would have been more thoroughly scrutinized and discussed before the people.

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—I think the explanation of my hon. friend quite bears out what I stated, that he thought it should be made a party measure.

HON. MR. AIKINS—I thought the country would be the gainer if it were.

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—In what way?

HON. MR. AIKINS—By the fuller discussion we would have.

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—Where can the hon. gentleman find an instance of the revision or change of a constitution being made a party measure?

HON. MR. AIKINS—The hon. gentleman can find it on reference to the action of the Toronto convention and the Lower Canadian Liberal party, to which he has just alluded.

HON. MR. CHRISTIE—The hon. gentleman, I see, has not changed the ground which he took the other day, and which is precisely as I stated it. He thinks it would have been to the public advantage if this question had been taken up and discussed by a party. In this, in my judgment, he is entirely wrong; and I say he can find no instance of a constitution having been revised by a party.

HON. MR. CURRIE—Well, I submit an instance—the amendment to the United