

stitutional to hand over to the people the power of voting directly upon a law before it came into effect. He contended that the responsibility of voting for a measure must rest upon the Legislature alone, and that it could not refer this responsibility to the people. When you find an advanced Liberal like Mr. LEATHAM taking that ground, and going to the length he did in support of it, you can well understand the principles that actuate the great majority of the people of England. Allow me to read to the House the language employed by Mr. LEATHAM on this point. It is not long, and it seems to me exceedingly instructive. *The Times*, in an article on the speech, says:—

Mr. LEATHAM's argument on this subject is well worthy of attention, not only for its bearing on the question of compulsory temperance, but from the much wider range of subjects to which it is applicable. "It is," he says, "the essence of representative government that the electing class, which is analogous to the class paying rates, shall possess no direct legislative power; and the principle of parliamentary representation is that not even the representative principle shall alone legislate. We have taken the precaution to protect the rights and property of Englishmen by the prerogatives of the Crown, the privileges of the Lords, and the authority of a representative Assembly. All these constitute the threefold and invaluable shelter which we have raised over the rights and property of the meanest subject in the realm. But here is a proposition which, with naked and revolutionary simplicity, proposes to intrust the property and maintenance of the rights of a large class of persons to diminutive, homogeneous, democratic, and irresponsible parliaments set up all over the country, in place of a central, responsible, compound, and constitutional one. It seems to me that this strikes at the root of a constitutional and representative system."

These, sir, are the words used by an advanced reformer, a member of one of the most advanced schools of politicians in England. They are words of wisdom, and ought to rest with weight on the mind of every admirer of representative institutions, who does not wish to see those institutions degraded in this country, and representation become mere delegation. (Hear, hear.) Why, sir, for what do we come to this House, if it is not because we are supposed to be convinced by argument, if it is not that we are to sit down together and compare notes and discuss the questions that may come before us, and to be convinced according to the force of the reasons that may be advanced for or against

them? And if we are honest, conscientious men, we change our opinions as we become convinced that that which we held before was wrong and the opposite right. But if the other doctrine obtains, that we are not representatives but delegates, we might as well meet here and pass measures without any discussion whatever, every man voting according to the instructions of the commission which he holds in his pocket from his constituents. (Hear, hear.)

HON. MR. HOLTON—What was the previous question?

HON. ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—Well, that was not voted upon without argument; for full opportunity was given to discuss it before hon. members were required to vote. I was saying, sir, that the hon. member for Peel committed an act of inconsistency in voting for these resolutions, and then proposing this amendment. What did the resolutions amount to? The honorable gentleman voted for an Address to the Queen, praying that she may be pleased to lay before the Imperial Parliament a measure for the union of these colonies, on the basis of the resolutions of the Quebec Conference. He voted for it because he approved of the proposition; and if we had followed the practice of the Imperial Parliament, the Address would have been adopted by the vote which he and a majority of hon. members gave, and probably would be on its way to England now for presentation to Her Majesty. It is a practice lately adopted to refer the Address formally to a committee, to report it back again to the House. Well, my hon. friend, by his vote, affirmed that this Address should be sent to Her Majesty; but what does this motion proposed by him declare? Why, that the Address which he declared by his vote should be presented to the Queen, should not be sent. That is the plain meaning of it, and—I was going to say that it gives the lie to his former action, but—is the very opposite to the previous vote of the hon. gentleman. (Hear, hear.) That is the course which my hon. friend has taken, and I must say that it is an extraordinary and inconsistent one.

HON. J. H. CAMERON—It is strictly parliamentary.

HON. ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—It is parliamentary because the Speaker ruled it so; but I maintain that the motion of my hon. friend is entirely inconsistent with his vote on my resolution.