

shall submit to the Imperial Government, will bear sway over the several English provinces on this continent, united in one great Confederation. (Hear, hear.) I can assure the hon. member for the county of Quebec, therefore, that the only purpose of the Government of which I am a member, in urging forward the adoption of the scheme submitted to the House, is to despatch it to England in order that the Imperial Parliament may merely sanction the letter of the measure. The Government never had a thought of taking the House and the people by surprise. If we were to go to England and pray for a Constitution different from that which is mentioned in the Address, we should be branded with disgrace, and deservedly so, and should render ourselves unworthy of the position which we now fill. These reasons are sufficient, I think, to shew that there is not so much difference between the opinion of the Government and that of the hon. member for the county of Quebec, as that hon. gentleman supposes. We are agreed on the point to which he takes exception; and as he has declared that he would vote in favor of the new Constitution if the Maritime Provinces continued to be parties to it, I have reason to trust that he will do so, as the Government will be in no way bound to abide by that Constitution, unless the other contracting parties shall accept it.

MR. POWELL—I must express my deep regret, Mr. SPEAKER, that the leader of the House should have been induced to submit to the House a motion of the character of that which you hold in your hands. (Hear, hear.) I distinctly avow myself a friend of the Administration, and as one anxious to assist them in carrying out the important scheme they have undertaken; and while according to them the fullest confidence, I must express my regret that their course in relation to this question, in this House, has certainly not been what I would have advised or been inclined to support. They selected their own mode, in the first place, as regards the manner in which this debate should be conducted, and from that mode they have departed. I did feel that when, as between the Opposition and the Government, there was something in the nature of a compact, that compact should be carried out. (Hear, hear.) I think the Opposition has its rights and privileges, and is especially entitled to have these respected by the Government, who have

so powerful a majority at their back. (Hear, hear.) When the Government departed from the understanding originally come to, as to the way in which the debate should be conducted, I believed that that departure was in the interests of the House and in the interests of the public. I do not hesitate to say it had my approbation, as far as my individual opinion was concerned. But, notwithstanding that it had my approbation, as tending to the convenience of the House and the advantage of the public, I did not feel that the Government were justified, so long as the Opposition were dissenting parties, in departing from the original understanding. That was my first ground of objection; and I think, in the present instance, the Government are taking a still more extraordinary course. I do not know whether a case can be found in the records of our own House, or of the English House of Commons, where the leader of the House has availed himself of technical rules to prevent a question being fairly presented.

HON. MR. DORION—To move the previous question to his own motion!

MR. POWELL—I do not know if such a thing is usual, or if a precedent can be cited for it. All I can say is, that if a precedent can be cited, I regret extremely that such a course should be adopted on the present occasion. We are here engaged in the discussion of a great constitutional question, with regard to which the Administration have submitted to us the resolutions of the Conference—I do not say of self-constituted delegates, or that they acted without the sanction of the people—but certainly they have taken upon themselves a great responsibility, which I readily admit they have well fulfilled, and I am quite prepared to endorse their course, in the framing of this scheme, from beginning to end. They first of all adopt those resolutions at the Conference, and they then come down to this House and say: "Accept them in their entirety, without amendment, without variation, or the scheme falls to the ground." That may be all very well. It may be all very well to deny the right of an appeal to the people. It may be all very well for us as a Legislature to arrogate to ourselves the right to change our whole constitutional system. That may be all very well. But, by this motion of the Hon. Attorney General West, they stop any gentlemen who dissent from their views from putting their