

they would insist on the Controller of Customs obtaining the approval of his constituents. I can picture to myself that gentleman, when on the hustings, dialing on the grievances and wrongs perpetrated by those ruthless and grinding Tories and assuring the people that, if they would only return him to Parliament, he would put his shoulder to the wheel, and ease them of all their burdens and wrongs. They do not. He, on his part, accepts a lucrative office, makes his bow to his oppressed constituency, and takes a legal leave of them and their grievances. I have always looked upon Responsible Government as a very elastic thing; it may be compared to an Indian rubber bag, capable of being squeezed into a variety of shapes and forms; and, provided you keep it inflated with the breath of the well-understood wishes of the people for the time, all well; but the present composite Government seem disposed to squeeze that very breath out of it, and hold it up to the people as an empty and meaningless thing. So much, Sir, for the consistency of the hon. member for Belfast and his new-found friends.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—Mr. Chairman; being a young member, I did not wish to be too hasty in rising to address this hon. Committee. But I cannot any longer retain my seat, when I hear such a reason given for delaying the General Election. In fact, it is no reason at all. Sir, in my boyish days I was led to believe that law and lawyers were nearly synonymous terms for rogery and deception; but I have lived that opinion down. Still, when I hear the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown advancing such reasons as he has done to-night, I am almost forced to the conclusion that my early impressions were correct. Now, if he was honest in voting for the "no terms" resolutions, it ought to be a matter of indifference to him how early in the summer the elections were held. If consistency had characterized the actions of the late Government, delay in the case was unnecessary. The attempt to justify putting off the Elections, on account of the general tenor of the resolutions on Confederation passed last Session, is, I think, without force, when we consider that the "no terms" portion of them is their most prominent feature,—so much so, that they receive their designation from it, and will continue to do so, while the Journals of this House remain in existence. The hon. member for Charlottetown has also twisted the members of the Government about the "composite" material of which it is formed. Be that as it may, I think their opinions are more in harmony with each other, and their actions characterized by greater unanimity, than were those of the late Government. One member of that "happy family"—the hon. member for Murray Harbor (Mr. Henderson)—was kicked (pardon the expression) out of that honorable body. And the operation appears to have had a beneficial effect upon him, judging from his present conduct, following, as he does, closely to, and firmly supporting, the present hon. Leader of the Opposition, who remained a member of the late Government after his (Mr. Henderson's) gentle dismissal.

Mr. BRECKEN.—To say that no terms could be offered that would induce us to enter into Confederation, was certainly going too far. The hon. member from Bedouque insinuates that I was prepared to enter into Confederation, if better terms were offered. This is an error. I did not say so, or deviate from my pledge to return the matter to the hustings.

Hon. Mr. HENDERSON.—Mr. Chairman; the hon. member, who has just sat down (Mr. Laird), in his reply to the hon. and learned member on my right (Mr. Brecken) has alluded to me; but I would remind him that it is quite unnecessary to attack me over the shoulders of another, for, I believe, I stand upon my own legs. It is not a question of the late Government; but I can assure him that I was neither kicked nor expelled out of the Government, as the correspondence on the subject, published several months ago, has sufficiently proved; and, if the question were put to the vote of the intelligent people of the Island, I venture to say that they would pronounce my conduct as honorable as that of any member in this House. The illustration made use of by the hon. member, I did not distinctly hear, but its drift I can easily understand; and believe that, if it may be taken as a true index to his forthcoming speeches, he may expect laurels, not a few, before the end of the Session. He has only bound on the state harness; let him not think too hastily that he would work his way through a difficulty like the one alluded to, with more credit than I have done. The hon. member (Mr. Davies), in mattering on his seat, while I am speaking; but, I must tell that hon. member that it would be much more gentlemanly for him to stand up and reply to me himself, if able to do so, than to sit prompting another for that purpose.

Mr. McLENNAN.—This discursive debate, Mr. Chairman, is a perfect waste of time. I am one of those who approve of the action of the late Government in reference to the General Election. Hon. members have brought into this discussion matters not before this hon. Committee. In the paragraph under consideration, there is not one word that has any reference to Confederation. It is a waste of time to be referring now to many of the subjects which have been dragged into this debate. There will be ample opportunity to do so when these questions come up, in proper form, before the House.

Mr. PROWSE.—Mr. Chairman: I feel it to be my duty to tell the hon. member for Belfast (Mr. Davies) that, when he undertakes to charge this side of the House as being the Confederate side, he is stating what is incorrect. There are, Sir, on this side of the House, men as strongly anti-Confederate as can be found anywhere. Why, Sir, the conduct of the majority, with respect to the elections for the City of Charlottetown, cannot be defended. The hon. gentleman charges us with changing our opinions on Confederation, because we have a Confederate for our Leader; and yet he and his party were willing and anxious to put that same gentleman into the Speaker's Chair. I am sure, if a Confederate was placed in that honorable position by the House, and on this side there are men who are strongly opposed to Confederation, much more than the act of the Opposition, in choosing him to be their Leader. I need not say one word with respect to the hon. member giving his own vote for a strong Confederate, after what has been said by others on that act of his. The Government side of this House is made up of old Liberals, Tenant-Leaguers, Confederates, and Conservatives; and on this side there are men who are strongly opposed to Confederation. With respect to the question, why the late Government did not cause the Elections to take place earlier, I may say that, if they felt that any danger was to come out of hasty steps, they were doing a good service in acting as they did. And, Sir, I believe, there was a time when a Legislature, only nine months old, was dissolved, and a new Election called. Had the action of the late Assembly taken place at the usual time, there was reason to apprehend that the same would have again occurred. If that was the reason, I consider it a perfectly satisfactory one, for it probably saved the country the expense of a second