

doubt as to the opinions of the people, the measure should be submitted to them before being passed. In Canada, perhaps, there was no doubt, but it is very different here. There are few men in this house who do not believe that a large majority of the people are opposed to the measure. The hon. Atty. General, who aids in forcing it through, entertained different opinions in 1861. In a speech delivered here by him on the 8th of March in that year I find him using this language :

"There is an honorable principle which must pervade and govern men in every position in life, and I would not envy the position of those who, hanging on to the tail of a majority in this house, must feel that in doing so they are betraying the trust reposed in them, and misrepresenting the views of their constituents." Again: "This is a matter connected with the interests of the people, and they should be the sole judges."

Mr. ARCHIBALD.—Read what we said.

Mr. MCLELAN continued:—We said at that time that we acted with a view to our accountability to our constituents at the next election, and that we were willing to take the responsibility of having our acts endorsed or not; but the hon. gentleman will see the difference between the two cases.—You are proposing to pass a Resolution upon which no man voting for it will go back to the people for the ratification of his act. The Atty. General says we have no precedent for asking a dissolution on this question. I think it is ~~how~~ who should have precedents before handing over the entire Province to a distant colony without the permission of the people. He says, he saw one in the union of New Zealand. The cases differ, but even there he should have told us that the people are dissatisfied and seeking a repeal of the Union by petitions to the British Parliament. And so it will be here, if you pass this resolution and carry out its intentions without consulting the people. But if you can obtain a majority to favor it, then you may hope for it to be enduring. It is one of the principles inherent in the minds of all claiming British origin to accept and obey the opinions of the majority. I do not believe, however, that a majority can be found to assent to a proposition which would sweep away our constitution and even blot out the name of Nova Scotia from the map of the world.

The hon. member for Richmond, Mr. Miller, in calling for this resolution, told us how proud he is of Nova Scotia. It is not he alone who is proud of her. We are proud of being British subjects, of being British Americans, but not less so, of being called Nova Scotians. That gentleman, however, seeks to blot out this name. Whilst he addressed the House I thought of that anecdote told by Hugh Miller of the codfishing captain on a voyage to Newfoundland, who, on going down to his cabin to consult his chart, and finding it in shreds and tatters, told his men they might as well turn about, for the rats had eaten Newfoundland. I do not mean to say that Nova Scotia will be literally devoured, but the rats are striving to eat out the name from the map of North America. Sir, if this proposition be carried into effect without consulting the people, I anticipate

the most serious results. There is in the breast of every man claiming British allegiance a principle—a feeling—implanted by God himself that he should be consulted in all changes affecting his rights and privileges and the constitution under which he lives. In no part of the British Empire is that feeling more strong and irrepressible than in this country, and if the Provincial Secretary carries out his proposition without consulting the people, this principle will rebel against the act. I have no hesitation in telling the hon. gentleman that he is tampering with the loyalty and allegiance of the people. He knows our attachment to the mother country is strong, but he must not count too much on it. Let me read to him as a warning an extract from the report of that celebrated Statesman, Lord Durham:

"Indeed, throughout the whole of the North American Provinces there prevails among the British population an affection for the Mother Country, and a preference for its institutions, which a wise and firm policy, on the part of the Imperial Government may make the foundation of a safe honorable and enduring connection. *But even this feeling may be impaired, and I must warn those in whose hands the disposal of their destinies rests, that a blind reliance on the all enduring loyalty of our countrymen may be carried too far.*"

Then he says speaking of the evils of having a colony disaffected:—

"If the British Nation shall be content to retain a barren and injurious Sovereignty, it will but tempt the chances of foreign aggression, by keeping continually exposed to a powerful and ambitious neighbour a distant dependency, in which an invader would find no resistance, but might rather reckon an active co-operation from a portion of the resident population."

The passage of this resolution before us seems a small matter, but it may produce the evils, named by Lord Durham. The most trifling causes often produce the most alarming results. The Castle may be strong and bid defiance to the invader, but a rat may undermine its walls. The ship may outride many a storm but a small insect may so destroy the strength of her timbers, that she will go down at the first blast of the next gale. Our city is healthy and happy, but a single breath drawn by a visitor, to the Cholera ship in the harbor, may bring to us pestilence and death. Taking Walter Scott's beautiful simile, the tree may strike deep its roots and send wide its branches, clothed in luxuriant foliage, but a small worm may destroy its vitality and make of it an unsightly trunk, from which the raven and the vulture shall watch for their prey, or the majestic eagle find a perch.

"I asked the strong oak of the forest, wherefore, its boughs were withered and seared like the horns of the Stag, and it showed me that a small worm had gnawed its roots."

Our forefathers brought to this country the British Acorn; they gave it congenial soil. Their descendants have carefully guarded and tended it, and wherever the sons of Nova Scotia have stood, beside the men of the fatherland in the hour of danger, the world has seen that we too have "hearts of oak", but strong and vigorous as this plant of loyalty may be, the passage of this resolution may touch its vitality.