

sented to the British Parliament against the scheme. He had a right to ask what had become of those petitions? The delegates had expected a monstrous petition to be presented to the House of Lords, but were disappointed when not a signature appeared, and thought that the battle had been postponed, to be fought on the floors of the House of Commons; their surprise could be imagined when the debate passed over without any such demonstration. Was then the assertion about the feelings of the people warranted? The opposition offered to the bill showed a fear that the majority really represented the people, for gentlemen seemed afraid that members on the Government side would secure two seats.

MR. ARCHIBALD said he did not see much danger of Colchester being unrepresented. He had not much opportunity of hearing how popular opinion ran in his county on the subject of Confederation, but he believed the hon. gentleman (Mr. McLelan) had lost no opportunity of fostering feelings of opposition to the measure, and had not thought it beneath his position to convene his (Mr. A.'s) constituents and personal friends, in order to create feelings of animosity against him. It would have been more manly to have waited until the matter could be discussed face to face. The time was at hand when it would be seen whether all these efforts were to be successful, but he would recommend gentlemen not to speak too confidently before the verdict was given. He would have no fear of the result, even though he had to meet a gentleman who had availed himself of such ungenerous means as he had described.

MR. S. CAMPBELL said that he only opposed the bill from a desire that the legislation should be perfectly matured, and he could not therefore be charged with giving factious opposition. If the other bills had been allowed to pass as introduced, the alterations which he had suggested would probably have been made in the Upper House, and that would have thrown discredit on the Assembly.

HON. FINAN. SECY. said there was no objection to the hon. member taking credit for the slight verbal alterations which had been made in courtesy at his suggestion. He would not go into the question whether the majority truly represented the people or whether all the boasting that had been heard rested on as firm a basis as the authority of the people's delegates. He thought that these declarations would prove as baseless as the assertions of the men representing themselves as delegates by virtue of petitions which they never had the boldness to exhibit. He thought the time had come when these gentlemen should state whether it was a fact or not that the petitions of two-thirds of the electors had never seen the light of day.

MR. ANAND said that after such a challenge it would not be consistent with his duty to the people to remain silent. He was not in London at the time when the petitions could have been presented,—before the bill was read a second time in the House of Lords he had taken passage for Nova Scotia. The petitions were, however, addressed to the House of Commons, and as he

had previously stated, the bill had been read there, contrary to precedent, before the printed papers stating the whole case were laid on the table. There was, therefore, not time to present them at the time when they would appropriately have come under consideration. As to the number of petitioners, the signatures were about 40,000. A few years ago a petition was considered of so much weight as that it should have turned out a government when it had only received 24,000 names. The petitions on the subject of Confederation were signed as those were. It was well known that every man in the country could not write his name, some of the names were therefore in the hand writing of one person;—in one case in his own county, a public meeting had been convened and one person appended the names of such as assented to the petition against Confederation. There was no rule of that House to prevent the reception of a petition to which any other than *bona fide* signatures were attached, but in the House of Commons there was such a rule and it was difficult to bring many of the petitions within the rule. The delegates were recommended to put them into the hands of an eminent member of that House, but he declined to present them as he would be held responsible for every signature. Another gentleman was applied to, but he, being a warm friend of the late Colonial Secretary, was persuaded not to present them after he had promised to do so. The inference to be drawn from these facts was that the leading men on both sides were anxious to confederate the Provinces, that they were averse to our being heard by petition, and wished to take advantage of the position in which our legislature had placed us.—Under these circumstances the people's delegates had abandoned the idea of presenting the petitions, more especially because of the unprecedented haste in reading the bill a second time and from the fact that Confederation was a foregone conclusion and because the feeling all around the house evidently was to get rid of the Colonies and prepare us for independence. What other explanation could be given of the intelligence from Canada that a nucleus of a standing army was to be formed by drafting 5000 men who should be paid by the Confederation? The meaning of this was that we were being educated up to independence and the Provinces were rapidly approaching that point.

MR. MCLELAN did not see why there should be so much ado about the matter when so early an opportunity would be afforded of testing the feelings of the people. Mr. Archibald had been absent from the country for eight months, and was it to be supposed that those differing from him should not utter a word during all the time that he chose to absent himself? It was not true that he had called meetings to discuss the question in Mr. A.'s constituency, for he had more than once declined to attend such meetings in that gentleman's absence, but he was now ready to meet him at any meeting that might be called. As to a meeting of Mr. Archibald's personal friends, he presumed the allusion was to a purely business meeting which certain leading men