

State in Ireland. I have in my hand an extract from a speech of Mr. Disraeli on that occasion, maintaining that Parliament had not a right to deal with this question without an appeal to the country, because, he said, you might change the whole constitution or the whole basis of society without an appeal to the people at all. These are his words :

"This is one of the gravest questions which can be brought before the consideration of public men. You are public men; you are men all of great intelligence and many of you of eminence. You make a Senate that the world speaks of with pride, while it recognizes your attributes with consciousness that your conduct elevates the general character of human nature. But remember that you are something more than Senators. You are representatives of a nation, and of an ancient nation, and I deny your moral competence to come to a decision such as that which the hon. member for Birmingham has recommended, and such as the right hon. gentleman, the member for South Lancashire, is prepared practically to carry out—I deny your moral competence to do that without an appeal to the nation. I say it is a question upon which the country can alone decide, particularly under the circumstances at which we have now arrived. You cannot come on a sudden, and without the country being the least informed of your intention, to a decision that will alter the character of England and her institutions." That was a declaration in reference to radical changes in the constitution, in reference to altering the constitution which had stood for centuries, and in regard to an appeal for obtaining the sanction of the nation to a change of very grave and great importance. There was nothing of that sort here. There was no great proposition submitted by one party and opposed by another, which the hon. gentleman was not able to carry through the House of Commons, and upon which he thought it necessary to take the opinion of the country. And so there is not in the whole history of England, in the whole history of parliamentary government in England, a single precedent for the course which the hon. gentleman has taken. Why, if any one will look at Professor Hearn's book on the English system of Government, he will find there a chapter on the means provided under the English constitution for harmonizing the different powers of the State. Now, he deals with this subject of dissolution in that chapter, and he makes the exercise of the power of dissolution subservient to one purpose, that is, the purpose of bringing the House of Commons into harmony with the advisers of the Crown, or with the Crown itself, or with the House of Lords where that body has rejected an important measure; and when a difference has arisen we can see a rational reason for the exercise of that power. But what reason was there for a dissolution here? Why, Sir, simply the reasons assigned by my hon. friend to my left—the Government saw that the current of public opinion was setting in against the policy which they had advocated, and they thought to anticipate it and obtain a verdict from the country before opinion was formed irretrievably against them. The hon. the Minister of Finance has referred to negotiations that he stated were begun in November. Why, Sir, we remember a visit of the hon. gentleman in November to Halifax. We remember the hon. Minister of Justice was feeling his way in the Province of Nova Scotia, and when the Minister of Finance visited the Province of New Brunswick, many of us anticipated a violation of the constitution by a dissolution of Parliament. The Government were feeling their way. The

documents to which the hon. gentleman referred, and which I have no doubt, as he says they existed, did exist, were documents prepared with a view to dissolution, as an excuse or pretext for dissolution. The dissolution was not for the purpose of seeing whether the people approved what the documents contained, but they were prepared to assist the Government in successfully appealing to the country, if it was thought safe to make the appeal at all. The Government seem to have changed their minds, to have given up the idea of dissolution. Their intention was to call Parliament together again, but many things had transpired to further alarm them, and instead of calling Parliament together they reverted to the original proposition and issued a new manifesto, which the hon. gentleman for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright) has read here to-night, and appealed to the country. All the time they were hesitating between the question of the National Policy and the question of reciprocity—whether they should support reciprocity or whether they should support the National Policy. They were not very sure. The right hon. gentleman asked that the old flag, and the old policy, and the old gentleman himself, should be supported. Now we understand all that. That was not reciprocity, that was the National Policy, it was the adherence to the old policy; that was the appeal made. But when the hon. gentleman and his friends came amongst the electors, they found that that was a very unsafe ground upon which to stand, and so they issued a new proposition and reciprocity was added. The hon. gentleman's policy reminds me of the cartoons that appeared years ago in *Punch*. I think it was in 1851 or 1852, in which Disraeli was represented as a chameleon upon whom free trade and protection were written, but written so intermixed that it was impossible to tell whether it spelled free trade or whether it spelled protection. And so it became impossible in many constituencies to say whether the right hon. gentleman and his friends were in favour of reciprocity or whether they were in favour of the National Policy. That they could not favour both, everybody can understand. The hon. gentleman says that he is in favour of free trade in coal. Why, I learn in the west that he has also made a proposition in favour of free trade in petroleum.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Not yet.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). That is one of the things that is to come.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. We will see.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Yes, we shall no doubt see precisely what the policy of the Government will be. An hon. friend near me says the country will have no opportunity of passing upon the policy. The Government do not intend that they should. We do not know, the Government do not know, what their policy will be. They tell us now they will know some time after the 12th October, and so when we meet here again, if the Government survive until that time, then we on this side, and the hon. gentlemen on that side who support the Administration, will be able to tell what the policy of the Administration upon the industrial and fiscal affairs of this country will really be. At present no one knows. Ministers cannot say; yet we are told the country has given a verdict in favour of this unknown thing. Now, the hon. gentleman has said that he