

void. The hon. gentleman had no power to make those appointments, and as a matter of expediency he ought not to have that power. He had practically ceased to be responsible for the carrying on of the affairs of this House. A new election had taken place. He knew perfectly well from the complexion of the members returned that it was exceedingly unlikely he would be nominated as the new Speaker, and that the responsibility would fall upon his successor, who would be held accountable for all irregularities and for every farthing of expenditure. It was, therefore, highly inexpedient and unwise in the late Speaker to tie the hands of the new Speaker, to fetter him for five years with those appointments made between October and February, filling up every possible crevice and cranny in order to prevent him from exercising his discretion in the choice of his subordinates. It was a very unwise attempt at usurpation, a very unwise attempt to prevent the Speaker from exercising his discretion in the great responsibility of carrying on the affairs of the House. It was also questionable taste to deprive the present Speaker of the patronage to which he was entitled. The hon. gentleman knew his responsibility had ceased and fallen upon other shoulders. Would it not have been wise, or proper, for the hon. gentleman to have left these matters to the present Speaker; to have left it to him to select his agents, subordinates, and assistants? There could, of course, be no objection to this motion. The matter ought to be settled, as the hon. gentleman said, in a manner that would prevent the question arising again, and he would venture to state that, when the House exercised its discretion upon the point, and settled it for ever, it would not be within the power of a defunct officer to make appointments after all essential responsibility must have ceased. It was quite true, as the hon. gentleman had said, that this Act was inadequate for the purposes for which it was passed. He quite agreed that the Act should be amended, and he desired that, either by the action of the Government or by a Committee of the House—it was a matter more connected with the House itself than the Government,—this subject would be fully considered, and the Act amended so as to

secure it beyond all doubt in the future, and prevent any infringement either of the dignity or privilege of Parliament.

MR. COCKBURN (West Northumberland) said he was very glad they had had announced from the head of the Government a distinct acknowledgement of a principle which should obtain in this House at all times, and that was that in the Speaker's hands was vested the sole appointing power of the officers and servants of the House, and that in him rested the sole responsibility to the House. He was very glad this had been acknowledged so clearly and so well, because they had had reason to fear that the rule which they knew to be a sound rule had been evaded. They had felt, from the rumours that had been passing current, that the appointment of officers of the House was in a measure to be taken out of the Speaker's hands, and that there was to be a pressure brought to bear upon that hon. gentleman to which he (Mr. Cockburn), as an independent member of the House, would regret to see the hon. Speaker yield, because he thought as long as they expected thoroughly efficient officers and servants of the House they must hold the Speaker responsible for such appointments, which should in a great measure be non-political. He was of opinion that the motion of the hon. member for Gloucester had been of use in that respect, and he was glad the question had been brought up. Beyond that he (Mr. Cockburn) declined to accompany the hon. member for Gloucester. He believed the interpretation put upon the Statute by the leader of the Government was the correct one. He thought there was no doubt that, when the Speaker ceased to represent the House by which he was nominated, and knew that a new Parliament had been called into existence, that he was *functus officii* as to the matter of appointments, and that his powers in that respect were unquestionably gone. The Statute was undoubtedly a very vague and defective one. But, if they only looked back at the old cumbersome system that existed years ago, when the Committee on Contingencies managed these matters, and the difficulties it entailed, they would