

that of *retrenchment*. I put it to the House that if there had been grievances they would have been brought forward; but that seemed to be the only question which the people were asked to decide upon. As a proof of this I refer you to Dr. Tupper's letters and speeches. In a letter dated May 16, 1863, over his own signature, he raises the issues for the elections. It is true that in that letter he turns aside for the purpose of showing that Mr. McCully was a man of most abominable character, tainted and tainted from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet when money and his own advancement were concerned; but he puts forward as the great issue, "taxation or retrenchment." The people decided, and returned a large party to the House in favor of retrenchment, taking the issue as they found it placed before them. Then we come down to 1866, and to what more particularly concerns the subject under debate—the resolution on which the Confederation Act is said to be based. To my mind that resolution lacks the essential element of authority to the delegates to do as they have done. The word "arrange" did not authorize the delegates to *accomplish* and *complete* an act; it merely put them in a position to discuss and eliminate all the arguments for and against the scheme, and to put the matter in proper shape before the House. The delegates, under that resolution, had a right to only "arrange" the political questions of the day—to bring the material into shape; but the command remained in the Legislature, and they were bound to come back for final orders. Before the delegates went to England there were no petitions, in favor of the measure, but numerous petitions against it; our condition was sound and good, and the people little thought that so great a change would be made without asking their consent. So it laid in my mind; I was convinced that the delegates would never think of having the act passed without consulting the people, and I had too much confidence in the Imperial Parliament to suppose that it would pass it under such circumstances. To dwell upon all the aspects in which Nova Scotian interests have been sacrificed would be impossible for me at present, and it is not so necessary since gentlemen have discussed one point after another so fully in this debate.

One of the points, however, which suggest themselves, is the injustice done to us by not having the debts of the different Provinces fairly and equitably adjusted. The debt of Nova Scotia has been created by the building of lighthouses, breakwaters, improving harbor, opening and maintaining free roads, building free bridges, railways, &c. Not one dollar of our debt was caused by deficiency of revenue to pay officials, whilst \$22,000,000 of the Canadian debt was incurred for borrowed money to meet current liabilities, and of course has no equivalent asset. It has always been a grave question with me whether the British Government, not being liable for our debts, can control our *assets*, and upon this point I might refer to the remark of Earl Gosford, who said that the debt of Canada, not being under the control of the British Parliament, the question could not be touched

by that body. I think there is a fair question for discussion in that suggestion. I will now turn attention to what this Assembly and the people have been doing for the last thirty years. Have they been inculcating no leading principles of Government? They have. In 1836 the policy of consulting the people at the polls was announced; Mr. Howe advocated the introduction of Responsible Government, the people accepted the principle, and the elections resulted in a majority to carry out that policy. In 1837 the issues respecting Responsible Government were fairly before the people, and the question was whether the country should continue under it or recede. It decided to continue. We are then down to 1850 when the House had under consideration a bill respecting the Legislative Council. It was thought by some that the Council should be made elective, and a discussion arose on that issue. This House at that early date enunciated the principle that in a change so material the opinions of the people should be ascertained. A resolution was carried in these words:

"Therefore Resolved, That it would be premature in this House to express an opinion on so material a change in our Provincial constitution, and that the sentiments of the people thereon ought to be first of all ascertained."

Here then this Legislature passed a resolution confirming indelibly the principle that not even a change in the Legislative Council, making it an elective instead of an appointed authority, should take place without an appeal to the people at the polls. Then again in 1851 the same principle was established, when the House of Assembly had again under consideration the question of an Elective Council. After debating several days, a resolution was reported from Committee of the whole. The following is an extract: "This House is of opinion that it is wise to defer the consideration of so organic a change in the constitution until the general election shall have been held during the present year;" which passed, and established the policy again of consulting the people at the polls. It would be worth while to scan the policy of the leading men of this country for the past few years. Dr. Tupper has been one of these leading men, and I will therefore be right in criticising his public acts and endeavoring to ascertain the ideas on which he acted. In 1859 he advocated strongly the principle that we should not accept the railway guarantee, and fasten a railway system on the country without going to the polls. Does not that shew that his conviction was in favor of giving the people the freest and widest expression of opinion on any important change? In 1861, during a constitutional debate, we find him again expressing a similar opinion, and bringing in petitions tallying with his views. Those petitions enunciated the principle that though the measures of the government might be supported by a small numerical number in the House, yet when the people outside expressed different views, it was the duty of the Governor to interpose his prerogative, dissolve the House, and let the people be heard. That convinces me that Dr. Tupper's mind was imbued with the idea of the power which the people ought to pos-