

position in the Government. He could tell the hon. gentleman (Mr. Miller) that he was quite able to protect his own honour, whenever it was necessary, and justify to the country the position he occupied. No hon. member could regret more than he did the retirement of the late Finance Minister from the Government, but it was unavoidable in the state of that gentleman's health. He knew that Sir Francis Hincks possesses talents of no ordinary kind, but still the country and the Government would not lose them whilst he was able to remain in the Commons and give it the benefit of his assistance. As respects his own position, he thought the hon. member might have made out a case if all the places in the Cabinet were already filled up by Conservatives. It would be just as well to wait and see the vacant place filled up before indulging in such criticism as some hon. members seemed disposed to do. (Hear, hear.) It also seemed to him that it would be soon enough to take exception to the fact that there were only two Cabinet Ministers in the House when it could be shown that those two were unequal to the duties of conducting the business. If any province were not represented at all in the Government than he could understand the remarks of honorable gentlemen, but as it was no one could say that the interest of every section were not perfectly safe. It seemed to him that neither Nova Scotia nor New Brunswick could fairly complain when they looked at their representation in the Cabinet in the other branch. He must enter his protest against the principle of sectional representation pure and simple, under our present system of Confederation. The double majority principle was tried for a while in old Canada, but the very gentlemen who advocated it most earnestly soon found that it was really impracticable. Gentlemen must agree with him that as long as the Government had the support of a majority of the representatives in the House of Commons, they might be fairly considered to represent the opinion of the people of the whole Dominion. His reason for entering the Government in the first instance was because he had confidence in the men who composed it—especially in the late Minister of Finance, and he saw no reason yet for withdrawing that confidence. (Hear, hear.)

Hon. Mr. MILLER regretted that the honorable gentleman should exhibit so much temper in the consideration of the question before the House. When he resented so deeply an imputation on his conduct, which no one had made, one would

naturally think there was very good reason for calling it into question. Had he exhibited so much feeling because he knew he was really vulnerable on that point. The peculiar circumstances connected with that honorable gentleman's entrance into the Government were historical facts. His position was considered at the time, a most unenviable one. Not only was he charged by his friend Mr. Macdougall with having departed from the original arrangement by which he was to go into the Government, but he was accused of having taken a course by which his friends were sacrificed altogether. He (Mr. M.) did not mean to say that Nova Scotia was not just as well off with its representation in the House of Commons, but he would say that it was not right and proper that five Provinces should be ignored while one Province had two members of the Cabinet in the Senate. Much force undoubtedly lay in the remarks of the hon. member from Fredericton (Mr. Wilmot) that the Senate was the guardian of the interests of the Lower Provinces, and under such circumstances he, as a member from that section of the Dominion, felt deeply aggrieved at any policy which would diminish the influence of the body. Lessening the Governmental representation in this House had that effect and should therefore be condemned.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST said that there was an act passed during the first Session giving to the Senate all the powers, privileges and immunities that were exercised by the Commons, and that act consequently extended the power of the body to a much greater degree, in his opinion, than was generally supposed.

Hon. Mr. WILMOT thought that might give the Senate the right to initiate money measures.

Hon. Mr. MILLER said that no lawyer would give such an interpretation to the act under our constitution.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER DE ST. JUST went on to say that there could be no doubt whatever that the diminution of Cabinet representation in the House lessened the influence and dignity of that body. Had there been four Ministers in the House they would hardly have taken the responsibility of selecting a Speaker from the House of Commons. That had been done once, but twice was really too much. He had not a word to say against the gentleman who now filled the chair; he had a high opinion of his ability; but still he must object to the practice of the Government in such cases, as contrary to the feeling of the House.