

House more work than it has had hitherto. Then we would hear no more of those holidays which I have always opposed. I am willing always to do my duty. Nothing pleases me more than to be at work; it is injurious to me—I feel that my constitution suffers when I am idling away my time.

HON. MR. VIDAL—While the resolution which has led to such an interesting discussion has unquestionably brought out much that has been interesting in the addresses to which we have listened, I question the propriety of its being introduced in this House. In the first place I doubt the existence of the foundation on which the whole structure of the argument is built. That foundation is alleged to be the supposed fact that this House has lost its prestige and is considered useless; and it seems that amongst ourselves there are some who do not fully believe that this House is of any great value in our political system. Now, I entirely deny both these propositions. I believe, with my hon. friend from Monck, that, so far from the Senate having lost any prestige in the country, it is better known and more highly respected in the country than it was a few years ago, and I am persuaded that the more fully people become familiar with the care and diligence with which all legislation is examined by this House, and the fairness that is exercised in dealing with every question that comes before us, the higher shall we rise in public esteem. The only ground upon which there is any real dissatisfaction among the people with respect to the Senate, really rests upon the fact—which we are not responsible for and which is to be regretted, but cannot be helped, as far as I can see,—of the very limited extent of our powers. We are spoken of in comparison with the Senate of the United States, for instance; but there is little resemblance between the two bodies. In the Senate of the United States there is vested a large amount of executive power; it can sanction, or refuse to sanction, treaties with other nations; it controls all important appointments, both foreign and domestic, and in many other ways exercises a very decided influence, and consequently is more prominently brought before the notice of the public, and its actions and deliberations receive more consideration

than is given to ours. We have none of those powers, and consequently none or but little of such influence. Our duties are very simple, but at the same time they are very important. In the course of my somewhat long experience now in the upper House, I have come to the conclusion that it is not only necessary, but a very valuable part of our political system. My hon. friend from Shediac, in his speech introducing this matter, used arguments which, carried to their logical conclusion, would not merely be damaging to the mode of appointment of Senators, but would lead to the abrogation of the Senate altogether. That appears to be the only logical conclusion of his arguments, and I do not think that conclusion is right. The existence of the Senate was determined upon by those able, experienced and patriotic statesmen, to whom the hon. gentleman from Alberton has alluded, who gave much time and careful consideration to, and brought vast experience to bear upon, the formation of the Federal constitution. In their opinion a Senate, appointed by the Crown, was an essential feature which should be embodied therein. Hon. gentlemen know that the late Hon. Geo. Brown was a very pronounced Liberal far in advance of many surrounding hon. members holding similar views. He never was in favor of an elective Legislative Council. From the very first he opposed its introduction into Canada in 1857. When Confederation was being discussed in 1866 he spoke in opposition to an elective Council. I will just read a few words that he then uttered to show that he still entertained the same view after an experience of having a partially elective Council for several years.

HON. MR. POWER—That was not the only mistake that Geo. Brown made.

HON. MR. VIDAL—It must be borne in mind that this opinion was expressed after nearly ten years experience of the system, so it received a very fair and satisfactory trial—he said:

“I have always been opposed to a second elective chamber and I am so still, from the conviction that two elective houses are inconsistent with the right working of the British parliamentary system. I voted almost alone against the change when the council was made elective, but I have lived to see a vast majority of those who did the deed, wish it had not been done.”

That was his judgement of it after 10 years experience.