

vote of the previous year was almost exactly reversed ; and the Union soon became a fact, constitutionally accomplished and loyally accepted.

How, then, did the Nova Scotia Government propose to bring their Province into line with the new position taken up by New Brunswick? They determined to act upon a vote of the then existing Legislature, if a favourable vote could be obtained, and to disregard the petitions for a dissolution which were pretty numerous signed in the country. A favourable vote *was* obtained—we abstain from any enquiry into the means used or alleged to have been used to obtain it—and the long-desired assent of the people of Nova Scotia to the Quebec Scheme was duly reported to the Colonial Office as having been given. Now, on the face of it, this was a very questionable proceeding, questionable for its policy as well as for its honesty. We do not hold, with Mr. Martin Wilkins and others, that it is necessary that a measure for altering the constitution or for doing anything else *must* be previously submitted to the people at the polls. To bolster up such an opinion we must also maintain that members of the Legislature are not representatives endowed with freedom of action, but merely delegates to carry out a predetermined policy—unreasoning machines, wound up in the country and sent into the capital to play set and fixed tunes. It is difficult to see where, if such were the case, a line could be drawn between the permissible and the forbidden : or upon what principle a “delegate” would be able to distinguish between a legal and illegal vote. Technically, we fancy, it must be admitted that the Imperial Government, on receiving the duly authenticated resolution of the Legislature of Nova Scotia giving in the adherence of that Province to the Confederation project, were justified in looking upon it as sufficient. Indeed if the Legislature does not represent the people, who does, or can do so? And it is obviously unfair to

impose upon the Colonial Office the task of deciding whether a vote of a Colonial House of Assembly is or is not in accord with the wishes of the numerical majority of the Colonists. In further justification of the action of the Secretary of State, it is not unfair to assume that the Imperial agent at Halifax had reported favourably on the state of public opinion, as it appeared to himself, and on the policy of his Ministers ; while it is difficult to conceive that they and he should have deliberately adopted a course based on premises so admittedly rotten as necessarily to involve themselves and possibly their cause in disgrace and disaster. It was probably urged that, if the result of a direct appeal to the people were *even the least* doubtful, a general election would for many reasons at that moment be particularly undesirable ; and we may be pretty confident that the assurance was added that the opposition to the measure was merely skin-deep, and would speedily disappear altogether in the face of an accomplished fact. Beguiled by some such assertion, and animated by a strangely strong desire hastily to consummate the Union of the B. N. A. Provinces, the Imperial Government endorsed a doubtful policy, and acquiesced in doing a little wrong that a great good might come. And so matters took their course. On the 1st July, 1867, the provisions of the B. N. A. Act came into force by proclamation, and the Dominion of Canada was created. To the conglomerate Cabinet then first formed Mr. Kenny, a merchant of Halifax and a Senator, contributed, on behalf of Nova Scotia, respectability and Roman Catholicism ; Mr. Archibald the experience of an old politician and the education and abilities of a sound lawyer. Dr. Tupper waived his claim to a portfolio. The new constitutional machine, considering that total absence of care and prevision which is characteristic of our present “let-it-slide” policy, ran with remarkable ease and smoothness for several weeks ; but on the 18th September a strange light was