

MR. MASSON said he did not intend to oppose this Bill on account of the number of Ministers retained in the Government. When he sat on the opposite side of the House, he did not disapprove his hon. friends when they had thirteen Ministers, and he did not feel himself justified in disapproving in his adversaries what he was not ready to disapprove in his friends. He remembered, at the time, that explanations had been given on the subject by the right hon. member for Kingston and by the late lamented Sir George E. Cartier, who explained that the number of Ministers would not have required to be so large if there had not been federal union as at present. If the Government had thought proper to dispense with the services of one of their Ministers, they, at least, would be abiding by the principles they had maintained in contradiction to those defended by Sir George E. Cartier. They, at that time, had said that thirteen Ministers were too many. He remembered they had gone over the whole world to show there were too many. They began with the United States, saying there they had only seven Ministers for forty millions, and that it was absurd for a small country like this to have thirteen. They travelled over to France, and pointed out that she had only nine Ministers to control the different interests of that great mother country of a part of our population. The hon. member for South Bruce, when defending the position of his friends, had tried to turn the table against the Opposition by saying that at the time the Liberals were complaining of the number of Ministers, there were only four Provinces in the Union, but that, since then, the North-West, Manitoba and British Columbia had been annexed. If his memory did not fail him, long after the annexation of the North-West, the establishment of Manitoba, and the annexation of British Columbia, the Liberal party went through the whole country, and on every hustings, and every stump, saying that even then the number of Ministers was more than would meet the requirements of this country. He appealed to his hon. friends from Lower Canada, on the other side of the

House, whether that was not their idea; whether they did not fight the Ministry, saying thirteen were too many, not only in 1869, but even in 1872. He had the proof in his hands. He would not do as the hon. the Minister of Revenue had done to him. He would read from the programme of the *Parti National*, offered in 1873, after the annexation of the North-West, the establishment of Manitoba, and the annexation of British Columbia, the opinion of the party in Quebec on this very subject—the number of Ministers. The changes they were to make in the Dominion legislation were, they said: 1st, the election of Senators; 2nd, the reduction of the number of Ministers. Now, the hon. member for South Bruce could, at this day, say that the reason why the Liberal party could be allowed to change their opinion and go back on their protestations of the past, and say that thirteen Ministers were not too many, was that the Dominion had increased. He believed the main purpose of the Bill, and that to which he most objected, was to reduce the work of the Minister of Justice and enable him to practice in Courts of law. Hon. gentlemen might say what they chose, but it was too late to repudiate that intention, because hon. members had recently ringing in their ears the eloquent speech made, a few days ago, by the hon. member for South Bruce (Mr. Blake) who distinctly stated that his hands were now free, and he could give advice to the Government, because anything done by him, at the present time, would not be considered as done from selfish motives, and that the Government should so arrange its affairs that the Minister of Justice should be allowed to practice in the Law Courts. He (Mr. Masson) was fully justified in saying that this Bill was distinctly introduced so as to reduce the work of the Minister of Justice and enable him thus to practice, as they would see very soon. He objected in principle to this mode of dealing. He most seriously and earnestly objected to the Minister of Justice practising in Law Courts, to his going through the country and pleading before Judges, who were dependent upon him for their promotion or for any advantages that might