

and his friends. I would like to know if that is a part of the policy of hon. gentlemen opposite—to make of this Parliament a farce? to disgust, if possible, a portion of the people with it, and add to the discontent which the member for West Ontario said existed all over this country?

Sir, he asks the question: Is this Parliament here to register the opinions of the Government? I will answer that question very shortly. In one sense Parliament is here to register the opinions of the Government; in another sense it is not. If the proposition is that Parliament is simply to shut its eyes and stop its ears and, when the thirteen members of the Cabinet bring down their measures, to swallow them, without the opportunity of accepting or rejecting them, then Parliament is not here for any such purpose. But if the question is whether Parliament is here to register the opinions of the Government, who are put in power by the majority of the people, and who have the confidence of the people, I say that Parliament is here for that and no other purpose. And when a body of men in minority set up their will against the representatives of the people sent here to support a Government, I think that gentlemen who propose that are proposing something which is against the genius of our government, and we might as well give up all responsible government if that is to be the rule. I give the Opposition right to full and free discussion, but when they have fully and pertinently discussed a measure, when they have taken up the issues involved in a manly and fair spirit of criticism and investigation, applied according to fair rules, I say when they go one single step beyond that it is not criticism but it is obstruction, and that is against the genius and the spirit of our constitution. The hon. member for West Ontario said we ought not to bring in such revolutionary legislation, because there is a rebellion in the North-West. He said an English Government never would bring in such measures when there was anything like a war going on. But have we not seen a franchise measure brought into the British Parliament within a few months past? During that time a very serious and, what threatened at one time to become a most complicated war, was going on in the Sudan and in different parts of Africa. We did not hear, however, that Mr. Gladstone withdrew his Bill; and we did not hear that anyone arose in the British House of Commons and proposed to Mr. Gladstone to withdraw that Bill for the reason that a war was going on.

The hon. gentleman states that this Bill has the forms of liberty, but that it is meant for despotic purposes. Now, what are the forms of liberty under which despotic purposes are concealed? I hold that the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) is bound, if possible, to make clear the despotic purpose in any measure that is brought forward by a Government with which he is not in accord. It is an easy thing to brand a measure as despotic. If you can get the people to believe that it is despotic then you gain your object. The measure is founded at first upon an Act of Parliament, it is put into operation by men of intelligence, who are sent here by the country, with the eye of the country upon them. The measure is to establish a franchise. The assessors' lists are the bottom of it—the substratum upon which it is built. Then come the revisors, with all possible publicity that can be given, and then comes the appeal from the revisors. There you have legal testimony, there you have legal decisions, and all this is open to the people, with a publicity which cannot be made any greater. Do purposes of despotism generally lurk in measures and proceedings such as these? I think not. I challenge the hon. gentleman to go through that Bill, clause after clause, and say where the power is taken from the people, where the courts of law or legal proceedings interfere with the will of the people. The hon. gentleman told us that there was discontent in all the Provinces. I ask, calmly and earnestly, if this is a time in the history of the country when hon. gentlemen should talk about discontent in all these Provinces? When we are

Mr. FOSTER.

face to face with a rebellion in which the blood of brave men, our brothers and those who are dear to us, is to be shed, is it the best policy that hon. gentlemen should assert discontent in all portions of the country? But he went further, and he threatened this free Parliament. Ontario, said he, has been loyal; she has been long suffering; she has been a good member of Confederation; but I will not vouch for the length of time that she will remain so if this Bill be passed into law. Is that the kind of legislation we are to have here? Is that the kind of legislators we are to have here? to threaten Parliament with secession if what they think is right is not given and what they think is wrong is not immediately taken back? I will not bow to any demand of that kind, and that hon. gentleman takes more than his shoulders can carry when he attempts to represent, in this, the Province of Ontario. Here sit hon. gentlemen from Ontario as intelligent as that hon. gentleman, from as independent constituencies, elected by the free choice of the people, and without forcibly displacing any other men to make room for them. The man who goes out into Ontario or into any other Province and threatens to unfurl a rebel flag will be the man who will find his level pretty quickly. Yet, here is a gentleman who had the assurance to turn to my hon. friend from Grey, and say: You have been put up to speak, have you? I wonder who made it possible for that gentleman to get into a position where he could be put up to speak—wandering from county to county, and city to city, like Japhet in search of a father, finding no people who would take him up of their own accord; by-and-bye, an hon. gentleman whom we all admired, who was just as able and just as honest as my hon. friend, is got out of the way, and the hon. member for West Ontario (Mr. Edgar) is got into a position to put himself up. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones; and if he had as long a head as the gentleman whom he succeeded in that way, he would have thought twice before he levelled a taunt at my hon. friend from Grey. If this Bill is passed Ontario will rebel, will it? There is a depth of fervent loyal sentiment in Ontario to-day, which will take the member for West Ontario at his word, and give him a most emphatic rebuke—when he threatens Parliament with the rebellion of an integral part of Confederation—and yet, it is of a piece with the hon. gentleman, and many of his associates. Who is it that countenanced secession in the city of St. John?

Some hon. MEMBERS. The Tories.

Mr. FOSTER. Is it? Then my hon. friend who sits for the county of St. John countenances secession? But of course he is not a Tory. In the city of St. John one of the political friends of the member for West Ontario is the only man, I am thankful to say, in the Province of New Brunswick, who runs an annexation sheet. He favors secession. In the Legislature at Halifax, a long motion for the dismemberment of the Union was brought in. Who brought it in? One of the members in accord with the member for West Ontario. In the Legislature of Quebec, when the North-West rebellion was at its beginning, who is it that brought up the motion of censure and of reprehension of this Dominion in its integrity, but one of the gentlemen at present in political accord with my hon. friend from West Ontario? What is the Club National doing in Montreal to-day and what is its political complexion? and yet he says to-night, with all this background of discontent, I am here to say—I know Ontario and I know that if you pass this Bill, I cannot vouch for the allegiance of that Province.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). Who signed the annexation manifesto?

Mr. FOSTER. Which annexation manifesto?

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. Half a dozen of them.

Mr. FOSTER. You should know.