

own side of the House, not on ours. He has also alluded to my election, but with reference to this, I can tell him, that the influence which gives me a seat in this House, is a true British political one. I have run two elections, and I owe my return to the respected constituency which I represent; and I believe that though not more than fifty votes ahead of my opponent, I have the confidence of my constituency. But, Sir, the hon. member has also said that in 1859, I was appointed Attorney General *nominally*. This, Sir, is not true. I have never asked for an office of any description for myself or any one connected with me,—I never asked for the Attorney Generalship, and when appointed, I was astonished, for I always considered myself too young a man to be appointed to any important office, or to a seat in the Government. But, Sir, the duties of that office I discharged, and the whole of them, and in giving it to me Mr. Palmer's name was never mentioned. For two years I enjoyed the whole salary of my office, and had nothing whatever to do with that gentleman in performing its duties, receiving no more assistance from him than one lawyer usually does from another. At the end of that time, however, seeing that he was serving the country without receiving any reward, while I, who had far less claims, was being liberally rewarded, I employed him to assist me, and paid him myself without having any communication with the Executive on the subject. I did not even know that the Council, as a body, was aware that Mr. Palmer was employed by me. I stake my word of honor, that I was appointed as freely as the present Attorney General. Will the last speaker deny the fact that I discharged the duties of the office while I held it. It was a free and voluntary act on my part to employ Mr. Palmer, and I was in circumstances which enabled me to do it; but I was in no way bound to employ him, and received no more assistance from him than the present Attorney General receives from any lawyer he pleases to employ.

Hon. Mr. HOWLAN.—It appears to me rather strange that the Executive should not be aware at the time that the hon. member employed and paid Mr. Palmer. Though I do live at Tignish, I can read the newspapers, and I know that it was the general opinion throughout the Island that the Government, when they gave him the appointment, intended him to act as he did.

Mr. BRECKEN.—I was sworn into office without one word being said concerning Mr. Palmer; and what I did, I did of my own accord. If I chose to employ and fee him liberally, I had a perfect right to do so. I knew when I held the office that of right it belonged to him.

Hon. Mr. HOWLAN.—The hon. member is only getting deeper into the mire. He says that the Government were not aware of the fact that he was employing Mr. Palmer. I think that had he employed a gentleman of the opposite party they would not have remained long in ignorance of it.

Mr. McNEILL.—I am, Mr. Chairman, one of the "young members," but I may, perhaps, say a few words, though I do not wish to occupy the time of this Committee. I had not the slightest idea that the paragraph now under discussion would have been the cause of so long a debate, as it did not convey any censure upon the late Government for having delayed the General Election. I do not intend, Sir, to go over all the ground that has been traversed by the speakers before me, or to argue whether the hon. member for Charlottetown or Mr. Palmer was Attorney General in 1859. But, Sir, we have been twitted for the manner in which we are carrying out Responsible Government. I would ask if the conduct of the present Opposition, when in power, showed any very great degree of consistency? I well remember that in 1859 the hon. member for Charlottetown (Mr. Brecken) came out to Wheatley River to support a friend of his who was running the Election in that district. He made a splendid speech on the occasion,—for, as you know, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member can be very eloquent—and almost the whole of it

was in favor of excluding officeholders from the floor of the House. This, Sir, was in the days of the Political Alliance; and the reasons given by the hon. member for having since changed his policy are not very satisfactory to me at least. The Tenant League cannot certainly have influenced him, for that League was not in existence at the time. Allusions have also been made, Sir, to our not working harmoniously together; but the Opposition must remember that we have not had a fair trial, and should consider, too, that such taunts come with a bad grace from them. Every one knew that during the last year the Conservative Government was composed of anything but harmonious elements. First, one member of the Executive was put out, or resigned, then another, till finally no Government was left. Though we are not carrying out the Departmental system in its fullest sense, still, if our principles are right, no censure should be cast upon us.

Hon. Mr. DUNCAN.—I do not think that the last speaker has said anything worthy of a reply, so that none is needed. I must say, however, that the present Government have seen the error of their ways, as we did. We went into one extreme, and for four years had not an officeholder on the floor of this House. When we found that our policy was wrong we acknowledged it at the hustings; but the present Government has never publicly disavowed their former Departmental policy, though now, after they have got into power, we find them tacitly admitting that the policy which they condemned in the Conservatives (that of having three officers on the floor) is the correct one. But, Mr. Chairman, is it from necessity or from a desire to do what is right, that they have appointed only three of their members to office? I am inclined to think that they feared some would be rejected, and the case of the Queen's Printer shows that it might have been as well for the party had he not taken office, though my hon. colleague has told us that he is glad that gentleman was rejected.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD.—The last speaker has said that the Conservatives, eight years ago, went to the hustings with the avowed determination to allow no officeholder on the floor, and that for four years they carried this policy out. This I will admit, but I am not so willing to concede the truth of his other statement—that they afterwards at the hustings acknowledged their error. It, I think, was understood among the members of the then Government that they were at that election to be silent on the subject of officeholders; and I am of opinion that the members of that party made no profession upon the subject, and that they were returned without any questions being asked them. It is well known that from that time they had three officeholders in the Legislature, and during last session we find them bringing in a Bill relating to Election Laws (Par. Rep. 1866, page 52) providing for as many as eight officers in the House of Assembly and Legislative Council. The paragraph relating to these officers reads as follows:—

"The Bill provides that any person holding the office of Colonial Secretary, Attorney General, Solicitor General, Colonial Treasurer, Commissioner of Public Lands, Postmaster General, Financial Secretary or Collector of Impost for Charlottetown, and being at the same time a member of the House of Assembly or Legislative Council, who shall resign his office, and within one month after his resignation accept any other of the said offices, under the same administration, shall not thereby vacate his seat in the said Assembly or Legislative Council."

The statement of my hon. friend, the member for Belfast, that he was glad on certain grounds that the Queen's Printer had been rejected by his constituents, has been made the subject of many remarks. The members on the Opposition side of the House must certainly be very obtuse. The hon. member only said that he was glad that gentleman's constituents had rejected him if they did not believe his professions sincere regarding his future policy on Confederation. This discussion has already been continued too long, but it is necessary to disprove the statements made regarding the inconsistency of the Government, when such charges can more easily be substantiated against the present Opposition when in power. That the present is a true Responsible form of Government is evident from the definition given by the Hon. Attorney Gen-