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MR. MILLS' SPEECH.

[From the London Advertiser.]

On Tuesday evening, Jan. 17th, Mr. Mills, Member for Bothwell in the House of Commons, delivered an address on the political aspect of the North West question, before the members of the Reform Association of this city, and other citizens. The lecturer was introduced by Ald. Fysh. Mr. Mills, who was heartily received, said:

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:—It is impossible that I can feel otherwise than gratified at having an opportunity of speaking to you upon those important matters of public policy which during the existence of this the first Parliament of Canada have been brought under its attention by Sir John A. McDonald and his colleagues.

WHY HE OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT.

I was elected as an opponent of the Government. I had long been a student of political theories, and political systems. I had formed my opinions of the conduct of public men in this country, and I declared most frankly, when I sought the suffrages of my constituents, that I had no confidence in the men who were then entrusted with the Government of Canada. I knew what their policy had been formerly, I knew the constitutional system under which they had for many years carried on the Government of united Canada and the policy which they had pursued, and I felt that however honest might be their intentions, that their political training had been of such a character as to unfit rather than to fit them for giving effect to the new system which had been adopted. Our public men had been trained under a system which placed no limitations upon the powers of parliament. They were about to carry on the government under a system with limitations both expressed and implied; a system with checks and guarantees against the powers conferred upon the local legislatures; and I felt that without the greatest vigilance on the part of the Opposition, these barriers would be broken down, and the provincial governments would be shorn of their powers

and of their independence. Under the circumstances, it was evident to my mind, that it would require quite as much care to prevent Parliament exceeding its powers as to induce it to use only for the public good those functions with which it was entrusted. I said at the time of my election that it was my strong conviction that under the policy of the present ministry we would be drawn in the direction of a legislative union, until provincial duties would be usurped by the Parliament of Canada, giving rise to sectional issues such as existed in old Canada before the adoption of the federal constitution. (Hear, hear.)

DEFENSE OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEM.

I know, sir, what reply to this statement will occur to those gentleman who support the ministry because they are nominally of the same party, who support them because of the prejudices of education, and not from convictions the result of laborious research and careful reflection. They will ask, who is more competent to give effect to the new system than the gentlemen who were its authors? But let me ask them, are our present ministers the creators of this new system? Is it a system so thought out and elaborated by them that they are more likely to understand it than any one else? They themselves can make no pretensions of this sort. We know they looked abroad and found it already in existence. We know in what respects they departed from the original, a departure in one or two instances founded upon an error in history, in law, and in political philosophy. We know what is meant by a federal system of government. We know who were the modern founders of that system, and I say deliberately, nothing done by the Premier or by any of his colleagues indicates in him or in any of them a peculiar fitness for building up, upon this continent, a new nationality upon a federal basis. We know, too, that the various colonies now embraced within the Dominion of Canada were possessed of powers of self-government which they never could have been induced to abandon. Whatever then might have been the views of the Premier and of others, as to the relative merits

encroachments upon