

permitted, to hand over the whole revenues of those Provinces for the next two years to the honourable gentlemen opposite, if they would assume the responsibilities of the Dominion in regard to those Provinces under the Confederation Act.

Hon. Mr. Smith deprecated the revival of electioneering contests which had taken place in New Brunswick. He was deeply interested in the country—his all was in it—and he would do his best to carry out the constitution, notwithstanding he believed it had been carried by corruption and fraud. He also gave his version of the manner in which the question had been treated in his Province. The last election was carried by a no-Popery cry raised by the Minister of Customs. The speaker then explained his negotiations with the Lieutenant-Governor in regard to the question of union, which he had contended should be submitted to the people, amid cries of "question."

Hon. Mr. Johnson said in reference to an appeal to the people, that it was a thing unknown in England for a ministry that could carry its measures to dissolve and appeal to the people. If that were to be the system, parliament might just as well be abolished, and every question be decided upon by the people direct. He denied that the last election was carried by the no-Popery cry on the part of the Confederate party; and the cry of Fenianism at a former election, of which complaint had been made, had no part in the last election.

Hon. Mr. McKeagney said:—Late as is the hour, Mr. Speaker, and much as I desire to avoid occupying the time of this House with any remarks of mine on the subject which has already become exhausted, I feel it my duty, nevertheless, in the interest of my constituents, in behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, to enter my protest, my emphatical protest, against this Confederation scheme, because I think it unjust to Nova Scotia, and more especially do I protest against the manner—the very improper manner—in which it has been consummated. The friends of the measure have time and again attempted to justify the action of the Assembly by the fact, the bald fact, that they had the power to change the constitution. I deny the position in the sense that it can be done with beneficial results or for any practical purpose. Do we not know, sir, that theory and practice are very different things? Supposing, for the sake of argument, that Parliament in the plenitude

[Mr. Tilley (Saint John City)]

of its power does undertake to consummate an Act (a Constitutional Act let it be called) at variance with the wishes of the people, will there be anything gained by such a course? Nothing whatever, and the statesman who pushes his measures in advance of the public sentiment evinces in my opinion neither tact nor judgment, and must soon be borne down by the popular wave. But I deny that anything can be found in Parliamentary history to justify the mode in which Confederation has been accomplished in Nova Scotia. It is true, as a general proposition, that Parliament is supreme, but in the interpretation of this rule we must enquire what are the ordinary functions of the Legislative body; is it not to make and repeal laws for the good of the people whom it represents? Was it ever understood in any way—was there any compact or agreement either expressed or implied between the people of Nova Scotia and their representatives, that travelling wholly out of and beyond the track heretofore pursued by their predecessors, they were at their mere pleasure to sweep away our Constitution, and hand over our Revenues to Canada, or any other power on earth. The idea is preposterous in the extreme! Have we the example in history of any people being annexed to another without their consent? I can find none, except in the instance of a country conquered by force of arms. The case of the union of Ireland cannot be referred to as a precedent to justify the measure, as that Act has always been justly regarded as a foul blot on the Statute book, and has given rise to discontent and heart-burnings, which break out occasionally like a running sore in the bosom of that unhappy land. Who can predict then what evils may yet grow out of this act of tyranny, perpetrated upon the people of a loyal and prosperous Province? We must also look at the manner of carrying the measure in our Legislature. I make no direct charge against any one, but certainly the complexion of the transaction is more than suspicious. On ordinary occasions of less moment than this, the policy to be pursued has been enunciated in the Governor's Speech. Parliament met, and not a word was said about Confederation. Thus were the people taken wholly by surprise, nor had they the opportunity of remonstrating against the Act until it was pushed through the Legislature. Thus was it conceived in secrecy, carried through the House with indecent haste, and accomplished amid the jeers, taunts, and abuse of the Confederation party, who accused their opponents with disloyalty and annexation proclivities. Is it any wonder