

lamentable and pusillanimous a condition.

Hon. Attorney General said that the Government did not require either coercion nor corruption to sustain it—the Government despised both. But was a member of the Government to go into his County, and find a subordinate officer under his Government, carrying on an active canvas against him? He knew his conduct was distasteful to the Government whose officer he was—he had written an insulting letter to his superiors, who wrote him on the subject; and therefore he brought on his own dismissal. Nobody denied to him the right to vote; but that was a widely different thing from using his position and the influence the office gave him, against a member of the Government. The conduct of the Executive in this matter was strictly British—it affected the rights of no man—every officer received his place on the understanding that he should not actively oppose those who conducted the Government of the Country. Nobody asked Mr. Geldert's vote for Mr. Wilkins—nobody asked him to canvas for that gentleman; but it should be known that the Government were determined to resent so indecorous a proceeding as a subordinate officer actively canvassing against his responsible superior. Would the Hon. gentleman opposite when in power have tolerated the active opposition of any Postmaster in any part of his County?

Hon. J. W. Johnston would like to know to what petty officer the line of demarcation for the operation of this principle was to extend—what paltry price was to be paid for the sacrifice of the spirit and independence of Englishmen. Earl Grey's despatch on this subject referred to officers of a higher character—not to such petty places as were distributed over Nova Scotia. If it referred to these, he repudiated it, as unsound and degrading. But the hint just thrown out was quite significant. Every little petty officer in Nova Scotia must take notice—an election is at hand—take care how you vote against any friend of the Government! That was the secret of this movement against Mr. Geldert, a young gentleman of most estimable worth, who did not disguise that he considered the vengeance of the Government as a hard requital for his exercising the sacred rights of an Englishman. A Government must be poor off, indeed, if it have to resort to such expedients to keep itself in power.—The Hon. Attorney General has asked me if I would have suffered a Postmaster in Annapolis to oppose my election? Why, Sir, if I am correct, I believe that the only opponent I have had in running my elections actually held the office of Postmaster of Lawrence Town. Did I ever think of his removal? No—nor of any subordinate officer in the County. The Hon. gentleman concluded by denouncing a principle so revolting in its nature and so destructive in its consequences.

Hon. Attorney General.—It may appear, Sir, that I ought to say a few words in answer to the speech of the Hon. and learned member for Annapolis—and yet, Sir, there is nothing to answer. As to the charges of corruption, these might have been well spared;

the Hon. and learned member knows right well that both in the Mother Country and the growing Province of Canada the principle for which I contend is acted on and established. There a subordinate is not required to yield up his independence—to change his political principles and become a convert to the principles of the Government from whom he derives his situation; but merely to refrain from being a violent political partisan; to abstain from using the influence which his office confers to weaken or overthrow that Government. Is this corruption? I put it to Hon. gentlemen in this House whether there are any grounds for such a charge.—But we have almost become accustomed to the terms of approbrium which flow so freely from the Hon. and learned gentleman's lips, whenever he touches any portion of the responsible system. Who does not recollect the case of Mr. Burleigh, Clerk of the Peace in Canada; there the principles for which I contend was asserted; and Sir, this principle forms one of the elements of the constitution under the vivifying and animating effects of which that Province has progressed as though by magic—trebling and quadrupling its revenue within a very few years. These high sounding sentiments—and bitter aspersions, then, with which the Hon. and learned member delights the House often—are as baseless and meaningless in every case as in this, and leave but a very slight impression on the mind of any man who hears him.

Hon. Mr. Johnston.—There is one point, Sir, upon which the Hon. learned Attorney General and myself are entirely at issue. He seems to consider that the principle of self government, to be properly worked out, requires that the hands of the administration should be strengthened at the expense of the people. With such an idea I am sure no liberal mind can coincide for an instant. The people—we were wont to be told in former times—the people were the source of all power; anything that tended to restrain the exercise of the largest amount of Freedom by them—to diminish their influence or circumscribe their sphere of action was illiberal and unsound. How different the doctrine held to day. Now the Government is the source of power; and every engine that can be brought to bear by them is used to cripple the influence of the masses. The holder of a petty Government office must either vote for the Government or refrain from voting at all. This Sir, is surely a curious and interesting theme for the speculative; those who desire a solution of the cause of the change—may remember that a man seeking office and a man in office are two very different persons.

Mr. Wade.—I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that the question has been fairly represented to the House. Our object, I presume is—as it ought to be—to elicit from the Government the true state of the facts as laid down by the Government; and the impression left on my mind by the speech of the Hon. Attorney General is—"that subordinate officers might vote, but would not be permitted actively to canvass and oppose the Government which sustained them in office." This is a doctrine which I hold to be sound in principle; let the subordinate vote, but the Executive are culpable if they permit him to become a political partisan. But, Sir, I go further than most Hon. gentle-