

often a denial of justice, as it was in this instance. The parties who had been suing at the feet of the Minister of Justice for an answer as to whether their claims could be tried judicially under a Bill of Rights, had gone into bankruptcy, and this no subsequent legislation could retrieve. He asked if this was the condition of things for which the hon. gentleman took credit, and he declared that he could show that the hon. gentleman had narrowed the rights of the subject. The hon. gentleman had taken away their privileges by an introductory clause. At present claims were to be submitted to a judicial tribunal; but the amendment said in effect to these very persons—"Although you have the right under the law to proceed; although the Attorney General would be compelled to grant a *fiat*, the Minister of Public Works can step in at the eleventh hour between you and your legal rights and take them away; and instead of giving you the Judges of the Supreme Court of Canada to decide upon the justness of your claims, he can commit them to the discretion of those men, who depend for their living from hour to hour on the word of the Minister of Public Works." Was this right? He thought not. The Government as was urged by his right hon. friend, should not have the power of placing one suitor upon one footing, and another upon another footing; this was not desirable for the Government themselves, as it would lay them upon the charge of unfairness and partiality, even when such condemnation was unmerited.

When this Administration came into power, what was one of their first acts? They deprived of his position Mr. Compton, an able officer at Halifax, who was replaced by Mr. Elliot, one of their supporters, who held another position entirely incompatible with the duties of an official arbitrator of the Public Works Department, being also Inspector of Public Works under this Government. The anomaly to have been expected consequently occurred the other day—the report of Mr. Elliot, as Inspector, was rejected by the Minister of Public Works. Let it be supposed it had been in the other direction—that he

Hon. Mr. TUPPER.

had refused to certify a claim, and the Government adopted his recommendation, and that it finally came again before this gentleman as arbitrator! Every man in this country should stand on the same footing. The power it was proposed to confer upon the Government was a dangerous one; and the Administration should not be so placed as to be open to temptation in this connection.

These claims, in nine out of ten cases, as the Minister of Justice said, were between private individuals and the Minister of Public Works; the former charged the latter in such cases with denial of justice; and yet in the Minister of Justice would be placed the power of deciding as to the manner in which their claims were to be adjudicated upon. This was contrary to the interests of the whole country, as well as to those of the Administration.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE stated that with reference to the charge of discourtesy which the hon. gentleman had reiterated, he had not previously thanked his hon. friend from Cardwell for answering it, but as it had been repeated he must say that the hon. member for Cumberland was a bold man indeed. The hon. gentleman reminded him of the famous Six Hundred at Balaklava; although cannon to the right of him, and cannon to the left of him, volleyed and thundered, he went on, but like the famous Six Hundred again, the hon. gentleman also came back very small.

With regard to a more serious, and another personal question, the hon. gentleman naturally misapprehended his position altogether; the hon. gentleman said that he (Mr. Blake) had not ventured to imperil his reputation as a lawyer by pronouncing an opinion on the right of this particular individual in regard to the petition. He appealed to the hon. members for Kingston and Cardwell whether in the present state of this Bill, pending as it was before Parliament, he would not be inflicting a fatal stab on his professional reputation if he had not kept his mind perfectly free and unprejudiced on a subject on which he might yet have to give a decision.

With reference to the hon. gentleman's argument as to the arbitrators,