

the elective privilege of some places must be restricted, in consequence of religious opinion. It is a broad principle indeed, and a bold one that would bring us to a position so startling. We are told, in substance, that certain counties are Protestant, and therefore, that they are entitled to peculiar privileges; it follows, that those differently circumstanced as to religion belief, are to be subjected to peculiar deprivation. Do gentlemen opposite really propound that as doctrine which ought to be our guide, in framing a bill for the representation of the province of Nova Scotia? The representation at present is unequal, and anomalous, and demands change; if changed, the alteration must be on some principle that can be understood. The bill of 1858 was based on population—and we are told that that is not proper,—but that education, and intelligence, and property, should also be considered. If gentlemen opposite cannot give us some means by which to measure these qualifications, their opposition on that part is futile. When we hear of religion as the distinction in representation, I inquire again—will those who oppose the present measure, explain the extent of the difference they propose to be made between Catholic and Protestant, and how much lower in the scale one is to stand than the other? We must have some standard. Is it right, I inquire, that the existing difference between Hants and Inverness should continue? Inverness, that has manifested its intelligence by sending to this house the leader of the opposition!! Take these two places as the guide to judge of the representation. Hants, by last census, had a population of 14,000; Inverness of 16,000,—but Hants sends five representatives, and Inverness two. Is that the ratio—the relative proportion which gentlemen opposite would establish between the Protestant and Catholic people of Nova Scotia? Is that to be the scale? Is a Protestant population to have more than double or treble the privilege of a Catholic population? Let gentlemen be plain and speak out. Let them not shrink from the consequences of their own principles.

I do not intend to dwell on a principle so incongruous to our notions of justice and constitutional right, but to touch it merely at this time, because the bill of 1858 being now withdrawn it is less important. The man must be bold who would calculate on the credulity or the ignorance of the people, so far as to propound the doctrine that the free exercise of religious opinion should be visited by the abridgment of political rights. This question of religious distinction comes with less force after the singular speech made on Saturday by the member for Windsor. He has a manner of illustrating his opinions which prevents them from being readily forgotten. We all recollect his illustration of the decayed orange, in reference to the Legislative Council. On Saturday he remarked, that divide the plum-pudding as you might, there would remain still the same number of plums in it; and thus he went on to show the arrangement of the province as you please, you cannot make more Catholics in it than there are—that they are a small minority, so outnumbered by Protestants as to leave no danger of their ever acquiring ascendancy. This helps me in the views which I urge on the consideration of the house, for thus it appears that not only is the argument drawn from religious distinction unsound in principle, and hateful in

character; but, if the hon member is to be believed, needless and uncalled for. If he be correct, it has not even the excuse of expediency. If it be true that Catholics are so small a minority—if they are to continue to be so outnumbered by other denominations, then what means the cry raised, that the bill of 1858, based on a principle so fair, was designed to effect the injury of the Protestants of Nova Scotia, and to overbear the religious rights of any part of the population?

The bill now before the house, as I have already said, does not go the length of the former bill; it is inferior to it, because it does not deal with the subject on so broad and general a principle. That bill was rendered impracticable by the factious opposition urged against it. In consequence of the opposition of those whose counties were to have diminished representation, the bill was impracticable, except the counties which were to be benefitted concurred in sustaining it. That measure was designed to remedy both of the evils that exist—the inequalities between counties, and the inequality within counties. The first of these involved the diminution of representation in some of the counties; the present bill abandons that to a great extent, it being found impracticable for the reasons given—from the repugnance to be expected in reference to those whose privileges were diminished, and from the banding together of gentlemen opposite. The present bill aims to remedy the other evil—the inequality that exists within several of the counties—the inequality of the privileges of one set of electors as compared with another portion in the same county; and I ask the attention of the house to the position of the representation in that respect. Such inequality exists in the counties of Halifax, Kings, Pictou, Digby, Annapolis, Lunenburg, Hants, Cumberland, Cape Breton, and Richmond. In all these great inequalities appear, in reference to the exercise of the elective franchise by electors within each county. For instance, Halifax township sends two, and the county two, while the township does not comprise half the votes of the whole county. A consequence of the present mode is, that all the inhabitants lying west of this harbour unite in sending four representatives, two county and two township; while all to the eastward possess the privilege of sending two only. The county is of great extent, reaching more than 100 miles from Halifax to the borders of the county of Guysborough, and including several classes of inhabitants.

The settlement of Musquodoboit presents a fair specimen of agricultural wealth and activity, as compared with any of the other counties. Along the shores are settlements of fishermen, and others, who derive their living in coast employments, separated from other portions of the inhabitants, not more by agricultural position, than by general habits and modes of business. The eastern district not only has not equal privileges, but as the western comprises the city of Halifax, and contains an overwhelming portion of the electors, the other district beside having unequal distribution of privileges, can scarcely have an efficient voice in sending a county member, except the west refrains from overruling their opinions. The bill proposes to separate the county into two districts, giving the eastern two members, and the western three; thus rendering the people to the eastward that measure of justice