

arrived when the Administration, able to anticipate and survey the principal parts and the general character of the work which awaits it, has been called on to consider whether it would reasonably undertake such work without a fresh access of strength and to frame its advice to Her Majesty accordingly.

"The question whether Ministers ought to retain or to abandon office should be decided by a General Election, with the opportunity which it affords for broad declarations of policy and issues truly national, and cannot be satisfactorily solved by isolated contests, of which the issue is in a greater degree dependent on close discipline and finished and concentrated organization.

"For a state of things thus full and casual, we desire to pass to one in which the nation will have had full opportunity of expressing will and choice as between the political parties. The Government of the day whatever it is, will be armed with its just means of authority both within and without the Legislature. The Opposition will enjoy the power, and doubtless will not shrink from the duty of taking office. The House of Commons will be reinstated in full possession of Constitutional authority, and when it shall see cause to withdraw its confidence from an Administration, it will not leave the Sovereign without resource."

Those opinions expressed by three distinguished statesmen who have been Prime Ministers of England for many years, are sufficient to show what the constitutional doctrine is. If the Administration finds it is so weakened that it is unable to carry out its policy, and it has important measures to carry, and believes the country will sustain it on an appeal to the people, it is entitled to advise the Crown to dissolve. If, however, it is a mere question of Administration, and the opposite party are strong enough to carry on the Government, it has no right to advise a dissolution; but if some great and important national question has arisen since the last election, and the Government are desirous to obtain the opinion of the country upon it, then they can dissolve, as, for instance, in such a case as that of the contract with the Syndicate last year, which we asked to be submitted to the country, but which hon. gentlemen refused to consult the country upon. I say it is perfectly clear from those statements that those hon. gentlemen would be abusing their constitutional prerogative, if this year they were to advise a dissolution of Parliament; but I do not think that that will be any reason for believing that such advice will not be given. At every step these hon. gentlemen are prepared to violate the principles of the Constitution, as in more than one instance they have violated it in reference to this particular measure. It is perfectly true that the hon. member for Lambton, in 1874, advised a dissolution, but the Parliament which he advised the Crown to dissolve was not one elected under his auspices, with the view of carrying out the policy he was prepared to submit to the country and upon which he asked the opinion of the country.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The elections of 1878 were not carried under our auspices.

Mr. MILLS. More than that the advice to the Crown for dissolution was proper at that period. We had a statement of a distinguished person in this country, that he himself had carried the elections of twenty-seven members from the Province of Quebec, who were elected through corrupt means, for the purpose of giving effect to his wishes and protecting his interests. I hold that the facts of that declaration left no other course open to the Government than to recommend the Crown to dissolve Parliament. But the hon. the Minister of Railways tells us that we are going to consult the country to ask it to approve what the Government have done with reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway—to approve the Syndicate contract, with all the incidents connected with it, and all the consequences which must necessarily flow from it. That is the statement of the hon. the Minister. Last year, these hon. gentlemen were unwilling to consult the people, they did not believe the people were competent judges; they had no confidence in the intelligent opinion of the electors of this country. But after they have carried their measure, after the mischief has been done, after it is impossible that what was done can be undone, those gentlemen are going to consult the country. They

are going to ask the country to approve of that which the country, if they disapproved of it, have not the power to reverse. The hon. gentleman referred to the resolution which I submitted last year, and upon which we took the opinion of the House. The hon. gentleman says, that the twelve months have falsified the statement set out in that resolution; there is one statement I admit, this resolution so far as facts are concerned, is wrong in stating. It states:

"That no line of railway shall be authorized by the Dominion Parliament or by any new Province to be constructed south of the Canadian Pacific Railway from any point at or near that railway except such as shall run southwards, &c."

We have found by what has since happened that the exception of monopoly in that resolution was a mistake, and that the Government has disallowed charters granted by the Legislature of Manitoba, within their constitutional domain. I may say upon that point I was misled by the statement made by the right hon. leader of the Government in his speech. He said:

"We know perfectly well that it would require all the exertion and all the skill and all the management of the country to make the eastern and western sections of this road fully compensate them and fairly compensate them for their responsibility and for the expenditure during these ten years. In order to give them a chance, we have provided that the Dominion Parliament—mind you, the Dominion Parliament; we cannot check Ontario, we cannot check Manitoba—shall, for the first ten years after the construction of the road, give their own road into which they are putting so much money and so much land a fair chance of existence."

The right hon. gentleman therefore told the House as explicitly as he could, that he had no power to disallow an Act of the Legislature of Ontario, or of the Legislature of Manitoba on this subject. What did the hon. gentleman mean by that declaration? It was perfectly obvious he did not mean us to believe he was going to exercise the veto power and disallow Acts of the Manitoba Legislature relating to Railways within that Province. I say it is obvious he did not mean us to understand that he was going to advise the exercise of the power of disallowance in the interest of this Railway Syndicate. He told us distinctly, and as explicitly as could be told, that, this Bill was one with which the Crown had no right to interfere. He has changed his view with regard to the constitutional supervision of this Government over the Provincial Legislatures since we met here last year. Then I find that the hon. member for Cardwell made a similar statement. He said:

"But we are told now that because of the fifteen miles there never can be any other railway into this country. To what does this apply? Simply to the territories over which the Dominion Parliament has control. There is nothing to prevent Manitoba now, if it thinks proper, granting a charter for a railway from Winnipeg to the boundary line. At this very moment there is a Company in course of organization to build a railway from Winnipeg to West Lynn, on the boundary. And after this agreement is ratified, this provision does not take away from Manitoba a single right it possesses; in fact, this Parliament could not take away those rights. It has the same rights as the other Provinces for the incorporation of railway companies within the boundary of the Province itself, and there is nothing to prevent the Province of Manitoba from chartering a railway from Winnipeg to the boundary to connect with any southern railway. The only guarantee which this Company has under the contract is that their traffic shall not be tapped far west in the prairie section, thus diverting the traffic away from the line, but there is nothing to prevent a railway being built in Manitoba, within the Province, that would carry the traffic to any railway that may tap it from the American side. That is the position with respect to this matter."

Now, Sir, that speech was made after the speech of the right hon. gentleman, and no doubt the hon. member for Cardwell based his contention upon the explicit and emphatic statement made by the First Minister. We see that the hon. gentleman did this from the statement brought down to Parliament, from the communication made by the Syndicate to the Administration, and it is perfectly obvious that the Administration has acted upon the assumption that they contracted beforehand with the Syndicate to exercise the power of disallowance arbitrarily, and in an unconstitu-