

political offence? There was the established church; the Queen's advisers had stated what the doctrines and discipline of that church ought to be, and those men, by remaining members of another communion, set the law in regard to that establishment at defiance. But they were not the only ones who acted in this way. We find that the Nonconformists, Joan of Kent, and Peterson, and Turwort and others, were executed on precisely the same principle, for holding opinions different from Elizabeth and her advisers. If hon. gentlemen will refer to some of the histories of that period they find these parties are spoken of as conspiring against the Government, and as parties guilty of treason; both Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. But what was that offence? It was that they declined to accept the rites and discipline of the establishment that had been created by law. Camden, in his *Annals*, mentions that, in his day, there were fifty gentlemen imprisoned in the Castle of York, the most of whom died of vermin, famine, hunger, thirst, dirt, damp, fever, whipping, and broken hearts, and that the only offence of those victims was, that they dissented from the religion of the Statute-book, and that of Her Majesty's spiritual advisers. Now, hon. gentlemen would not like to have the intolerance of that age quoted as a reason why they should not now be granted the rights of ordinary citizens. They would not like to have the religion of that period, and its enforcement by those who were of the same religious persuasion as they are, quoted, as an evidence of their intolerance. It was the necessary outcome of the age in which those people lived, for when you undertake to extend the authority of government over the religious and ecclesiastical, as well as over the civil affairs of life, when you insist upon conformity to the one, as well as the other, it was a necessary consequence, that those who dissented in their views from the establishment, should be in a very uncomfortable position. Now, one of those who was executed at that period for opposition, was the Jesuit Campion, and he, at his trial, said, that his only offence against the Government was that he had been guilty of holding a faith different from that held by the State. We would, no doubt, be ignoring history altogether if we did not see that many members of the Jesuit Order took an active part in the restoration of the Stuarts, and why was that? Because the Stuarts favored their religion, and the Stuarts would establish it. The universal opinion was that some religion or other must be established, and they did what was perfectly natural for anybody to do—they sought to establish their own religion. When James II became an avowed Roman Catholic, and when he was using his sovereign position for the purpose of the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith and for overturning that of the great majority of the nation, there were Protestants who were then as active as ever the Jesuits were in endeavoring to bring in King William and in effecting a change of government, giving to the country a parliamentary sovereignty instead of one based on the notion of Divine Right. So you find the Jesuits were in treaty again on the death of Queen Anne, or in the closing years of her life, to bring back the Pretender, because the dynasty was at an end, a new family was to be established on the throne, and the question was as to whether it was to be the Pretender or some member of the House of Hanover. If you take the history of the Stuart period in Scotland, and if you consider the relations of Mary, Queen of Scots with Knox, or of James VI with Knox, you will see that that great Reformer's opinion of duty of the sovereign and of the connection between the Church and State are wholly different to anything what we entertain to-day. No Presbyterian to-day would care to have his political views measured by the political standard of John Knox. He knows that the world has been changed since that date. He knows that society has undergone great changes, and that what was regarded as right and proper at that period would be a wholly

improper thing to-day. Toleration is of later growth; toleration grew as the state authority was contracted. There is no place where we hear so little with regard to religious interference in the affairs of state as in the republic beside us. Why is that? It is because the Government is extremely limited, and because every subject of that sort is excluded from the domain of political authority. So, to-day, we have a far greater amount of religious toleration, we have a more tolerant spirit abroad amongst every religious community, than existed in the former period, simply because we more fully appreciate the importance of confining the sphere of Government operation within narrower limits than did our forefathers. Now let us look at some of the political views of that question. I regard it as extremely dangerous to our constitutional system. The hon. gentleman has put forward, as the first branch of this amendment, a proposition which I do not see how any hon. gentleman who favors a Federal Government can uphold. He says that this House regards the power of disallowing the Acts of the Legislative Assemblies of the Provinces, vested in His Excellency in Council, as a prerogative essential to the national existence of the Dominion. Why, Sir, the United States has a national existence; it has lived for the past 113 years, and the President has no power of disallowing a State law, or in any way interfering with the authority of a State Legislature. Every measure is left to its operation. If it is *ultra vires*, the courts, and the courts only, can say so. But the hon. gentleman asks this House to declare that the whole machine of government in Canada would go to pieces unless the Government exercised this veto. But, Sir, there is no doubt whatever that it would be a gross abuse of the trust committed to them by our Constitution if they were to exercise it on the present occasion. Our constitutional system is similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom. What is the meaning of that? The United Kingdom has no federal organisation. Why, Sir, the words refer to the relation between the Executive and the Legislature. Our Constitution is similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom, in giving us responsible government; it gives us a Cabinet controlled by a majority of the House; and it gives us a House subject to an appeal to the country at any moment that the Crown thinks necessary. There is a certain sphere of exclusive action assigned to the Local Legislatures, and a certain sphere assigned to this Parliament. Let us suppose that a Local Legislature, within its own sphere, had certain important questions coming before it; suppose this question were one; suppose Mr. Mercier had said the Jesuits have a moral claim upon the Jesuits' estates, and that he had been beaten in the Local Legislature; that he had gone to the country on the question, and that a majority had been returned with him to the Legislature to carry out that particular measure; how long would your system of parliamentary government endure, if the Government here should, after that measure was carried, take sides with the minority and disallow it? Sir, the Local Government have a right to go to the country upon a public question, if the country is the proper tribunal to decide whether they are right or wrong, it is perfectly clear that it cannot be the constitutional rule that this House is the proper tribunal to decide. How long could parliamentary government endure if the Administration here were to exercise that species of supervision over the Legislatures upon whom responsible Government has been conferred. If we should act the part of ancient Downing street, and undertake to decide what is wise or unwise, why, Sir, your Government would be at an end. If you have local self-government conferred upon the people of the different Provinces, it is clear that the electors of those Provinces, within their constitutional authority, are the ultimate court of appeal for the purpose