

notice and vindicate them from the gross calumny which we have heard.

Next we were told that the petitions presented here at the last Session numbered but a few thousands. I well recollect the circumstances under which those petitions were withdrawn from general signature. While they were being circulated for that purpose the country was told by members of this house, and their partizans elsewhere, that Confederation would not be brought here; that the Government dare not bring it here; and I think I might bring it to the recollection of one of the delegates that he proclaimed the opinion that the subject would not be presented to us for many years. It was under these and other circumstances that the people ceased petitioning, and but for the representations I have referred to, the number would have reached that of those which were sent across the water.

The Provincial Secretary, in referring to the scheme, touched upon one important topic—the fisheries. My constituents, sir, are deeply interested in that branch of industry—none more so, perhaps, except those of the county of Halifax, and what is the history of Confederation in that aspect? How damagingly has Canadian influence operated on those engaged in the fisheries of the country? Every one knows that they have been sold and sacrificed; and whether it be Canadian or Imperial agency that has been at work, I care not—the melancholy fact remains: our fisheries and our fishermen have been sold. This, sir, is a foretaste of the fruits of Confederation—this is a specimen of the policy that will be pursued in reference to the many other interests of the Maritime Provinces when it suits the objects of the new “Dominion.” There is no man, young or old, engaged in the prosecution of the fisheries, and dependent upon them for his support, but has this melancholy conviction forced upon his mind—that to be a British subject is to occupy a position inferior to that of an American. All that valuable property which the Legislature has been from year to year declaring to be the peculiar possession of the country has been transferred for a consideration too paltry and contemptible to mention. Every member here, who has fishermen for his constituents must feel that this Canadian policy should induce him to pause a long time before giving his assent to this Union.

I now come to that part of the Provincial Secretary's observations which relate to a gentleman who, though he is here, is debarred from answering for himself, inas-

much as he has exhausted the privileges which the rules accord to him. The so-called annexation sentiments of the hon. member for East Halifax have been proclaimed by the Provincial Secretary. I understood my hon. friend to say this: “I do not wish to be an American, I wish to be a British subject—I wish to remain a Nova Scotian, and to enjoy my birthright and my constitutional freedom as such; I do not wish to be a Canadian.” That is the whole extent of the ground on which this charge of annexation sentiments has been founded and sought to be fastened upon the hon. member. The next name on my list is the hon. member for Inverness, who referred to a topic that is very distasteful to me, because it refers to a state of mind and intention which it is derogatory to the honor of this House to suppose that any member of the House is moved by—that is, the matter of corruption. As I have said, the topic is derogatory to us, it is distasteful to me, and I will pass it by with only this remark—let the people be our judge. But the hon. member thought he had made a great point when he asked if we had the machinery for testing this question at the polls, taking into consideration the population of the various counties, and the number of members returned. But he forgot that that is the machinery by which this House is constituted, under any and all circumstances and in relation to every question, and therefore I consider that his analysis of the population and representation of the several constituencies was no proof in support of his position. Then the hon. member spoke of the union of Cape Breton with this Province; but he forgot to tell us, as he should have done, that at that time the island had no representative institutions; its affairs were managed by the Governor and Council, and its people were not represented at all. The people of the island were therefore elevated in the scale of constitutional freedom when their interests were placed under the protection of representatives duly elected by them. I now come to the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Shannon.) He greatly mistook the reference which I made to the period and the doings of Nero. I meant and made no allusion at all to the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, in connection with the merry-making in which the “speech” called us to join, but my remarks were aimed at the concocters of that speech. It was in connection with the proposed rejoicings that I made the reference to the tyrant who, in the midst of a calamity such as never afflicted this Province, saw such great reason for merriment. The hon. gentleman then went on to give us a glowing picture of the