

## DEBATE ON THE REPEAL RESOLUTIONS.

MONDAY, FEB 10

## HON. ATT. GENERAL'S SPEECH.

HON. ATTORNEY GENERAL addressed the House as follows—I regret proceeding to the debate on these resolutions in the absence of the hon member for Inverness, but having been informed that he is not likely to be in his place for some days, I find it necessary to go on with the discussion. I do so with the less regret because I know that this debate will be reported with accuracy, and that consequently that learned and hon. gentleman will be put in possession of the arguments which I and my friends on this side of the House intend to use. I regret that my vocal organs are not just now in very good order, and that I feel some difficulty in addressing the House; but I shall endeavour to discharge the duty devolving upon me as well as I can under existing circumstances. I am about to lay before the members of the House, before the people of this country, and probably before the people of England, the facts of one of the most important political cases that ever arose in the Colonies, and in order to do so satisfactorily I shall endeavour to show the true condition in which this country was placed before certain political changes took place in its constitution. I shall endeavour in the first place to show that Nova Scotia was a well governed and law respecting, a contented and a happy country. She was a well governed because her institutions were moulded in miniature on the model of the British constitution, which is the finest political system by which any nation was ever governed—a system calculated to maintain order and harmony among all orders of people—a system under which obedience to law and the necessary result of obedience to law, liberty, have been better maintained than in any other country; for, sir, however paradoxical it may seem, it is a literal truth that the highest degree of freedom consists in obedience to law. It is obedience to law which preserves to me my rights and liberties, my property and my life; and therefore, however inconsistent it may seem, it is actually true that the highest degree of liberty consists in obedience to law; and that country which possesses institutions calculated to produce that result, must be the happiest nation on earth. Now the constitution of Nova Scotia was based upon the principles of the British Constitution—those principles which best suit the genius of the people. Its whole condition was different from those of any other country on the Continent of America, and the constitution which was granted to the people of this province by King George II., and which had been enlarged and greatly improved by his successors on the throne of England, was a well working constitution. It was as much like the British constitution as it was possible to make things which are different in their nature. There were some defects in it, among which the greatest certainly was the want of a court for the impeachment and punishment of political offenders. That was a deficiency in our system,—without it no system of Respon-

sible Government can be perfect, and it is certainly curious, but by no means very remarkable, that the great statesmen who have originated this splendid constitution for the confederation of Canada have taken precious good care in its manufacture,—whilst they have established courts for the administration of ordinary justice, as well as courts of appeal—to leave out the court of impeachment, which, considering the nature of the men who formed that constitution, and who are likely to be instrumental in carrying it out, would be the most important court of all.

When we compare our constitution in Nova Scotia with that of the Great Republic, the contrast must be favorable to this province. We admire the people of that country, we have sincerely sympathized with them in their recent distress and troubles. We feel towards them all the emotions of fraternal affection, but we do not approve of their constitution. We consider that their institutions are possessed of two fatal defects—the one is democracy, the second Confederation. We consider that having our little constitution moulded upon the monarchical institutions of England, makes it infinitely superior to that of the United States, although the latter is a master work of human hands, and the finest piece of composition ever prepared by men for political purposes. It was manufactured by men who were really statesmen—by men who loved their country—by men who had been educated in an English school—by men who had sense enough to perceive the beauties of the British constitution—by men who endeavoured with the utmost imaginable pains and skill to apply the principle of the British constitution to a democratic system and form of government; but the people of the United States were unfortunate, after having separated from England in 1783, in the political system which they instituted. Had they combined in a legislative union—had they incorporated all the States into one Legislature, having one set of laws and revenues, they would undoubtedly, at this time, be the greatest nation upon the earth. They certainly would not have been second to any other; but, unfortunately, they chose Confederation, and that Confederation has resulted as every Confederation must result, for it is impossible so to adjust the rival and discordant interests of different countries under a Confederation as to maintain permanent harmony. It is not in the nature of things that they should continue as separate and individual countries, having separate legislatures and individualities, without clashing with one another at some time or other. We have seen, notwithstanding the skill with which that famous constitution of the United States was made—notwithstanding the intelligence of that people, that great evils have made their appearance already. The Confederation was broken, an internecine civil war delayed their land with blood, and they expended in three years more than probably three times the amount of the national debt of England, in money, and the destruction of their property; and,