

present upper Chamber is not an efficient check. Without wishing to speak disrespectfully of the upper House, I may say that we all know, except in some few isolated cases, they have contented themselves with being mere registrars of our Bills, which they read over, and, perhaps, correct some errors in spelling or grammar, and then send them down to us. They have exerted no real influence in the State. They are of no use, and all that can be said of them is to employ the language of the member for Lambton (Mr. Brown), they have done no harm."

And yet that Council was the prototype of our Senate of to-day. Its very picture.

Sir John A. Macdonald, who was then Attorney General (West) continues his argument for the abolishment of the nominated Council :

"I would indeed understand the proposition to destroy one Chamber entirely, but if it were thought necessary to have a check upon one branch, the other branch must possess some real power."

It plainly appears that the upper Chamber had authority given to it by the constitution, but that it had in effect no real power, and that was one of the reasons why Sir John Macdonald, and the leading statesmen of his day, thought it advisable that an upper Chamber, which had no real power, should be reformed. In answer to Mr. Brown, Sir John A. Macdonald said :

"I was stating that we had not the British Constitution in the Province. We have it only in name."

Hon. gentlemen will remark that, because the upper Chamber was nominative, Sir John says we have not the British Constitution in this Province; we have it only in name.

"It was intended in 1791 that we should have a transcript of the British Constitution, and nominally we have it except in the difference between life and hereditary members of the upper House. But we have not really the British Constitution, for we have in fact one Chamber elected directly by the people and acting directly on the Crown. No one in this House can get up and state that there is a real and effective check upon this House ever exercised by the nominees of the Crown in the upper Chamber. Those hon. gentlemen then, are fighting for a system which is not the British Constitution, and they are fighting against an attempt to introduce in spirit the British Constitution, which is one hereditary sovereign, one body elected directly by the people and being the immediate numerical expression of the voice of the people, and the other a body checking that numerical expression."

Again Sir John goes on :

"A check is necessary unless we wish our single chamber by degrees to absorb both the judicial and executive as well as legislative powers. It has pretty nearly absorbed the executive power already, and if no check is applied it will ere long absorb the judicial, and when it does that the constitution is at an end."

I ask hon. gentlemen if the facts are not parallel; if now the executive power is not wholly absorbed by the other House?

Now, Sir John says that when it comes to that, we are not within the spirit of the British Constitution, and that our constitution is nearly at an end. The position with us, at present, is graver than some of us imagine. Just now there is no great difficulty in the way of governing the country; everything is in harmony; but I say it is our duty to guard for the future.

HON. MR. KAULBACH—What do you think of an elective Senate?

HON. MR. POIRIER—I will, when I come to the terms of Confederation, give the reasons why it is we have no elective Chamber now. In 1856 the nominative House was replaced by an elective House, but the statesmen of that day had not the element we have now to constitute an easy and proper electorate for the Council. Had Confederation existed then, as now, the electorate for the second House would have been found or should have been found in the Local Legislatures; but there was no Confederation as now, and they did what was natural, and what was rational: they created a special electorate for the second House. That electorate consisted, as hon. gentlemen are aware, of large districts, 24 in Quebec and 24 in Ontario. That state of things went on up to Confederation, and at Confederation a new departure had to be made under the new order of things. My hon. friend from Lunenburg asks me, why it is that we have not an elective second Chamber? There are a great many reasons for it, but one of the main reasons is this: that members of the upper House found it too difficult to canvass a whole district of country, in order to be returned. Those gentlemen were men supposed to be above a certain age, and they found that they could not, without injury to their health, undertake an election which was exceedingly difficult on account of the area that had to be canvassed and of the expense incurred; and it resulted in this, that men in good standing, advanced in years, would not face an election. Therefore it was thought advisable that the second Chamber should not be elected by the people as was the case in the lower House. At Confederation, I am astonished that no one thought of a second chamber elected by Local Legislatures. There was an already prepared electorate for a second House; such an electorate as had been chosen by every civilized