

that the government belongs to the people, and that the people mould it as they please. The government and Queen of England belong to the people;—the Queen represents the majesty of the nation, and if the people of that country thought proper to-morrow to set up a different form of government,—if they were foolish enough to abandon the finely working and checking principles of their glorious constitution—to send adrift both the Sovereign and the House of Lords and to form a republic it would still be the government of England as it was during the Commonwealth. So that there is no principle more clear than that the people own the government and can do with it as they please. It is plain likewise that the government can have no existence except by the will of the people,—that it cannot maintain itself except by their assistance and support, and that the taxes which the people of a country contribute to maintain the dynasty or government must be their voluntary gifts.

There is no power in the Constitution for taking a shilling out of a man's pocket;—he only parts with his money by his free will and the process by which the maintenance of government is secured in the British Empire is this: that the people elect representatives with the power of levying taxes. There is no other power known to the constitution which can lay its hands on a man's property in this country. These are the sound principles of the constitution, and we find that in former times the taxes were called benevolences, subsidies, gifts, and a number of other expressions were used to imply, and which all implied that everything which the Crown demanded from the people was their voluntary gift for the purpose of maintaining and carrying on the government. Acting on these principles such men as Chatham and the men of his country, and the Washingtons, the Madisons, the Jeffersons, the Hamiltons and the Morris of the United States—men who were political giants compared with the pigmy and crippled Statesmen of the existing colonies, contended with propriety that no Statute could impose a tax on the Colonies, because the colonies possessed legislatures of their own having the sole and exclusive right to levy taxes on the people. The contest for these principles was successful and will be so while the Empire remains. If these principles are sound, and I should like to see the man who can controvert them, what is the position of the British Parliament as regards the British North America Act? I have demanded that the postulate, that the people were not consulted on the question should be admitted,—I have demanded also that the postulate that there is no act of our own legislature to sanction that statute should be, and it is, admitted. What then has the Imperial Parliament done? Against the will and without the sanction of the people that Parliament has taken the liberty, not only of taxing us but of causing us to be taxed by another power. The complaint against England on the occasion of the Stamp Act was that the Imperial Legislature itself had taxed the people of the Colonies, without having power and authority. We have a worse complaint than that—ours is a much more aggravated case. What we complain of is not that that legislature has attempted to tax us, but that, what is ten thousand times worse, it has put us into the hands of other Colonies, larger, more populous, and more powerful and more extravagant Colonies—Colonies who have no feelings in common with us, who are alien to us, and authorized them to lay their hands on us and tax us at their pleasure. If the Parliament of Great Britain had no power to tax us *a fortiori* ten thousand times, it has no power to create a new legislature in any part of the world with that power. What it has not itself it could not confer on others. Therefore on British principles the act alluded to is void—it never was law because it violated the fundamental principles of the Constitution, because it imposed taxation on a people whom it had no right to tax. The hon. member for Inverness looks us in the face, and, with an immense amount of assurance tells us that we are not taxed by a Parliament in which we are not represented, and he asks, “Are we not represented in the Canadian Parliament?” I ask what right had England to create any Parliament to tax us, giving us just such representation as she thought proper? Is not our representation in the Dominion Parliament an insult to, and a mockery of, the people of Nova Scotia? Is not the man who would accept such representation, and be satisfied with it, fit for the Lunatic Asylum? How many representatives have the people of Nova Scotia to protect their interests against the Upper Canadians—against the Frenchmen of Lower Canada—the strangers and foreigners, whose names we cannot pronounce—in whose elections we take no interest—to whose returns to the Legislature we can make no objection? We have nineteen men also; if they were the finest men ever produced on the face of the earth—the finest statesmen ever known—every one of them as fine an orator and as profound a politician as the hon. member for Inverness—their arguments would not stop the taxation of Nova Scotia as long as they would be talking. That is the way in which we are represented, and this is the constitution which the hon. member for Inverness has been laboring to defend. The people of Nova Scotia, if they accepted such a constitution, would be as abject slaves as the people of Turkey, the serfs of Russia, the fellahs of Egypt—the most degraded people on the face of the earth. Does the hon. member suppose that the people of free Nova Scotia will submit with the certain knowledge that the Statute is void. Why is the Imperial Statute void? Simply because its preamble is false. If that preamble were true, no man would be insane enough to dispute its validity. If the people of Nova Scotia desired Confederation with Canada, on the conditions imposed by that Act, and the Queen of England were willing to confederate us, there would have been nothing improper or unconstitutional in the