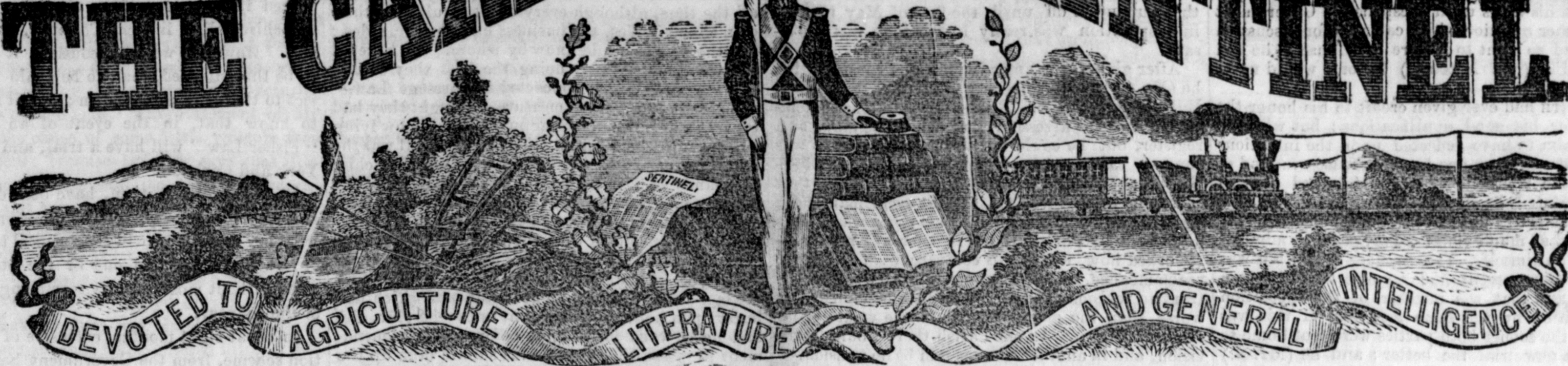


# THE CARLETON SENTINEL



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## Provincial Legislature.

### DEBATE ON MR. FISHER'S AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.—Continued.

#### MR. FISHER'S SPEECH.—(Continued.)

Hon. Mr. F. said his learned friend was perfectly right, though he should have stated nothing that was improper, or disclosed any Executive secret, and it was very unfair for the Surveyor General to allude to it under such circumstances. Some member of the Government had stated that the credit of the Province had been destroyed by the late government. The government had no control over the appropriations, and the only measure proposed to give that control, had been opposed by every member of the government in the House at the time. When the Loan bill passed, he (Mr. F.) wrote to Halifax and ascertained that Debenures could be sold; before the government resigned they had commenced a negotiation to raise money. His learned friend from Northumberland had stated that if the House divided equally on this question, the opposition could not form a government. Now he (Mr. F.) contended that they could form a government strong enough. Four or five of the members who spoke against the amendment stated that they wished to try a government by its measures, and would give any government a fair trial. Now, form a new government and see if these four gentlemen would give it a fair trial, which would make a difference of eight on the division, which would be a large majority. His learned friend had objected to the late government they had appointed a member of the old one Auditor General, and offered a seat to others. They had appointed a member Auditor General at the instance of a large majority of the House. He was not disposed to say whether it was wise or not; they had never offered seats to any member, to his knowledge, and no such offer could have been made without the sanction of the late Council. His learned friend from Westmorland had expressed himself in favour of Responsible Government. It was the sort of Responsible Government that many other gentlemen opposing the amendment were in favor of, and to which he (Mr. F.) was altogether opposed. [Mr. F. then read from the Journals of 1851 a Resolution to the effect that all local appointments were made on the advice of the Executive Council, who are responsible, that the appointment of a Chief Justice and Judge was an undue interference with the local concerns and violation of the principles conceded to the Province, and that it was to the interests of the people and the dignity of their position that the Executive Council should have resigned when these appointments were announced.] In his (Mr. F.'s) opinion this contained the true Responsible government doctrine, but the learned member for Westmorland voted against it and approved of the amendment, in which it was stated that the mode for making the appointments should have been the subject of grave remonstrance to Her Majesty's government. And this is the kind of responsible government some members admired—the old exploded system. His learned friend the Attorney General had said the late government was one of false pretences; that it had been conceived in corruption and brought forth in iniquity, or something of the kind. This was a fair description of the present government. Contrast the late government with the one that preceded it, to which he belonged, as to promises.—Take one of the speeches of the Governor. He referred to three important questions—the Election Law—Registration of Births, and an Improvement of the Road system. The Election Law was brought in, discussed for several days; the Speaker proposed to insert the Ballot; the members of the government divided, the Secretary voting one way, the Attorney General another, and the bill, after being kicked about the House awhile, was left on the table. The Bill for Registration of Births was discussed, and either abandoned or postponed.—They had not the moral courage to propose or political influence to carry any measure relative to the Roads. The late government carried every thing they promised. They had carried the Election Law, the Railroad, an improvement on the Jury system, and in the supervision of Roads by establishing the Board of Works. It was urged by his learned friend the Attorney General that if these discussions continued, it would unsettle the attachment of the people to their institutions. It would have the very contrary effect. The more the question was discussed, the more political know-

Macaulay, speaking of the House of Commons says it is supreme in the State but accountable to the nation. "Members chosen by small constituencies are kept in awe by public opinion. Every thing is printed; every thing is discussed; every material word uttered in debate is read by a million of people on the morrow. Within a few hours after an important division, the lists of the majority and minority are scanned and analyzed in every Town from Plymouth to Liverpool. At present therefore the best way in which a government can secure the support of a majority of the representative body is by gaining the confidence of the nation." Here is the true check upon corruption, and the true reason why the present government have not the confidence of the House. They have lost the confidence of the country, and must expect to lose the confidence of the House. He therefore asked the House to pass the amendment. The country called for a change in the government. They had deceived the country. They stated before the election that they were merely provisional, and when the elections were over the government would be formed to suit the House. Surely that time had arrived, and the House were prepared to form such a cabinet as would receive the confidence of the country. His learned colleague had stated on the hustings that Mr. Chandler had only accepted office temporarily, and would, as soon as the Legislature met, retire, giving countenance to the theory of a temporary Government then put forward. They could not carry on the government, and it was a mercy to them to relieve them at once from their political agony. He therefore called upon the House to pass the amendment.

The House then divided as follows:

**Government.**—Messrs. McPherson, Allen, Gray, Wilmut, McPhelim, Montgomery, Godard, Botsford, Landry, McMonagle, Street, Z. Earl, Kerr, Desbrisay, J. Earl, Boyd, Scovil, Lawrence, Barbarie, Read.—20.

**Opposition.**—Fisher, Hatheway, Smith, Gilbert, Gilmour, McAdam, Ferris, W. E. Perley, Tapley, Connell, Mitchell, Johnson, Sutton, McNaughton, Lewis, McClellan, Harding, Tibbits, C. Perley, Watters.—20.

His Honor the SPEAKER said there was no record of a Speaker being placed in a position similar to that in which he was found on account of the equal division of the members of the House on the ex-Attorney General's Amendment. He felt the importance of his situation, representing as he did two constituencies, the electors of St. John and the members of that House. He had listened with attention to the various speakers, but he thought it was extraordinary that so little had been said upon the merits of the question under discussion. The most marked feature of all the speeches was that the members eulogized themselves to the skies and deprecated their opponents. He asked was that of any importance to the country? The first three days of the debate Departmental Government was often heard and all the changes were rung upon it in that time, but the last three days that had been dropped and responsible Government was the favourite expression. Departmental Government was dangerous to the interests of the country, the word was never heard in England, it was a scheme of new growth, not above 10 years old; since its introduction it had worked most injuriously to the Province, and no good came of it. The Reform Bill introduced true Responsible government into England, the effect of that Bill was to disfranchise the rotten Boroughs, whose representatives voted with the Government on every occasion, and give the franchise to Manchester and other large cities; that system contemplated lessening the direct influence of the Government in the House of Commons, but this which has been introduced into New Brunswick had a different and just contrary effect, increasing instead of diminishing the Government influence. Look, said he, at this abominable system in this Province, is the country safe while it is in existence? Had the Government any tact they might have secured a working majority, that they have not done so, only exhibits their want of judgement. Responsible and Departmental Government had been well defined by an hon. member from Charlotte, as a mere squabble for office; and while that system of squabbling for office continued, dangerous results must follow. He was amazed that the intelligent people of the Province would submit to it for a moment. The hon. member from St. John had used a stronger and more expressive term which denoted the true policy of Responsible and Departmental Government, when he said "To

How true and still how strange. Who had ever heard of such an expression in a deliberative Assembly with reference to great Constitutional principles of Government? The citadel they had attempted to take by storm, and had they succeeded the first object would be to break into and sack the public chest, he feared that in this instance there would be but few spoils to divide. The hon. member from St. John had taken an appointment under the Government and got a taste of the spoils, and possibly it had increased his appetite for more.—He (the Speaker) had not during the debate heard one word which evinced a spark of patriotism in the members who had spoken. The people were sacrificed to the selfish purposes of office holders and office seekers, the question paramount with them was, who should come in? who go out? this principle was as regular in its operations as the vibrations of a pendulum, and he was sorry to hear the remark of the hon. member from Westmorland, however truthful it might be and applicable to the present contending parties, "when rogues fall out honest men obtain their dues." In ten years he had not been able to see any but disastrous results from this abominable system. He believed it would be to the interest of the country to have the House purged of all Government offices. It had been argued that their presence was necessary in order to afford explanation of various measures which might come up, but he (the Speaker) thought that this little Pedlington might get the information it required by address. Perhaps the remedy would be asked for, he would suggest that it might be found in the introduction of a true system of Responsible Government, by which the House would be rendered free from undue influence of Government, independent and honest, the Legislative Council an independent branch exercising a check upon the Executive and Democratic branches. He would have the heads of departments men of integrity, who should hold but the one office, they should be public servants, not the people's rulers. The hon. mover of the Amendment had quoted Montesquieu, but he would quote the same author in another way, he says "when the Legislative and Executive powers are united there is no liberty." Those powers are here united, and he (the Speaker) considered the liberty of the people in danger. He hoped the system would not continue. He was seventy-three years of age, and to himself it was no great matter what system of government prevailed, but he should like to leave a legacy to posterity by assisting to rid the country of the present monstrous system, which was taking it down to destruction, and must inevitably result in bankruptcy. There was only one point in which the Government was open to condemnation, that was for not appointing Commissioners, but for aught the members of the House knew it was for the good of the country that it was neglected, and if the end justified the means they deserved the commendation of the House. He thought the House should pass a Bill of indemnity in order to relieve the Government and parties who ought to have claims under the Railway Laws.—A case of a similar nature occurred not one hundred years since in England when the then Minister, the Earl of Chatham, laid the nation under what was called 40 days tyranny, by issuing debentures to meet some extraordinary emergency, but Parliament as soon as it met passed a Bill of indemnity. He (the Speaker) was no party man, and he thought the Government should have a chance to bring down their measures before they were condemned. Were he to vote for the opposition it might justly be said he had given a factions vote. He again deprecated the system of Responsible and Departmental Government as a most dangerous one, declaring that probably there would be at least two discussions of a similar nature and extent to the one just had during the session. He considered that the day which saw the present system established beyond the power of repeal or amendment his property would depreciate in value 33 per cent.

[The darkness of the hour prevented the Reporter taking readable notes which, accounts for the brevity of the above report of the speech of his Honor the Speaker.]

MR. HARDING rose and said that he felt called upon to make a remark on the extraordinary speech to which they had just listened. He wished to know whether for particular expressions dropped by him in debate, respecting charges made, he was to be arraigned by the chair? if so it was most extraordinary. The Hon. Speaker had been very careful to call hon. members on the floor of the House to order whenever they reflect improperly upon the conduct of other hon. Members or impute

casting vote, he had imputed the most unworthy motives to him (Mr. Harding) and to members of the House generally; and against such a course he (Mr. H.) desired to enter his solemn protest. He (Mr. H.) for one would not submit to the chair assuming such a censorship, and applying what construction he chose to the conduct of hon. members. As to office, the past was with the government and the people,—his future entirely with his constituents, to whom he was ready to appeal.

TUESDAY, February 24.

MR. FISHER this morning introduced the subject of his Honor the Speaker's speech of yesterday. He said that within his whole knowledge of parliamentary proceedings he had never either read or heard of such sentiments, reflecting as they did upon the whole House, emanating from a Speaker.

Hon. ATTY. GENERAL rose to order, and contended that if the hon. member for York had anything to say in disapprobation of the Speaker's observations, it must be at a future period, and not while the Address was under consideration.

Mr. Fisher resumed. He knew he was in order, and should not be put down either by the Speaker or the government. He felt that as a member of the House he had been grossly insulted the previous evening from the chair; and it was well perhaps that he had not at the time given vent to his feelings, else he must have said something which he might regret after mature reflection, and he hoped that some further explanation of the Speaker's conduct would not be withheld from all whom he had so deeply injured. On the subject of Departmental Government—a principle which his honor the Speaker had assailed, but which was not by any means the point at issue at the time, he was willing to enter at any time, and shew that it was not only new in these colonies, but that it was also recognized and upheld by the Imperial government. Here the hon. member read an extract showing the necessity for an infusion of the government in the popular branch of the British Parliament.

His Honor the SPEAKER replied that he was sorry he had not had time to say much more, and that after a night's reflection he could find nothing to retract. He had applied his observations only to holders of office and office seekers; and on that as well as on every other subject, he would speak the truth of his mind. When called upon to speak, in giving a casting vote, he considered he had the same right to speak his views with the members of the House, and he would continue to exercise that right, leaving the House to deal with him as they thought proper. He would retract nothing.

Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON said that when the Speaker had made use of the language so justly complained of, the question of Departmental Government was not that at issue. His Honor's explanation to the effect that he did not include the whole House in his observations, and that the application was not solely to either party, by no means mended his position. Was the country to be told that there were two parties in the House, each so intent upon their own private interests that they did not in the whole contain a single grain of patriotism? If so, the sooner a dissolution was announced the better, and let the people themselves have an opportunity of asserting their belief or unbelief in the proposition put forth by the Speaker. If the Speaker was to recommend for the adoption of this country the absolute usages of 1688, and if he could convey that impression to the country to which the opinions of the Speaker should ever be entitled, then it was, he would say again, time to have one dissolution more. In giving such opinions he (Mr. J.) however thought that his Honor the Speaker had exceeded the bounds of his office; for while it might be his duty to reflect the opinions of the House, it was not his duty to reflect upon them.—He felt that if all his honor the Speaker had said against both the government and opposition must go forth to the world, it was only right that the party to which he (Mr. J.) belonged should at least disclaim its application.

MR. MITCHELL said he had left the House last evening with feelings, such as he had never felt before. During the whole debate he had admired the order maintained by the Speaker; but when his honor declared last night that he had not detected a grain of patriotism in all that had been said on both sides, then he (Mr. M.) had felt himself deeply wronged, as he had not on any occasion either held office or sought for it, and had ever been actuated solely by what he conceived to be the good of the people. His Honor had done