

scarcely thought his hon. friend the Attorney General could say the same. He (Mr. J.) had ever sailed under the same flag, not beneath the Stars and Stripes one day and the Union Jack the next.

The former government, composed of a majority of the members of the present, had never originated and carried through the House a single measure; the plan they adopted was on the consideration of those bills, when they found what the feeling of the House was, to have progress reported and the bills were never heard of after. The late government had originated as many measures in two years as the former government had in five, and every measure which they introduced they carried.

The present government have accused the late of never having done anything towards encouragement of Emigration, but the very money which the present government were so liberally wasting, had been obtained under a resolution passed by the late government last winter for Emigration purposes.

With reference to the amount stated to have been due to the Imperial Post Office, he (Mr. J.) would state distinctly that when the late Government came into office they found a debt of £2100 due that department,—that when they went out the whole amount due was but £900, and would deny that the credit of the country had suffered through their mismanagement. Possibly they were not as expert at accumulating or spending money as the present government. They did not believe it wise to lay an impost duty on the people merely for the purpose of accumulating a surplus revenue, but merely sufficient for actual demands upon the treasury.

He (Mr. J.) contended that those subjects which at the last election were the questions, had nothing to do now either with the ins or the outs. Then a large number of the liberals were led to unite with those who differed from them in every other opinion for the sake of having the liquor law repealed. But that he considered was not a fair expression of the political views of the people. He thought the day was coming—whether it should be at once or in the regular order of things it would come, when the people would express their opinions, and then the members of the present government would be convinced that the opinion expressed by the Attorney General in '51 was the popular will now.—He (the Attorney General) had changed, but not the people.

He (Mr. Johnson) deprecated the introduction of religious differences into this debate. He hoped it would be long before the country would be effected by sectarian prejudices which so powerfully interfered with the peace and prosperity of the country. He pronounced a woe on that man who should first introduce religious strife. At the same time while he deprecated anything which would promote it, he was prepared if it must come not to shrink from his duty in connection with it.

[This discussion having already occupied so much of our space, and wishing to keep pace with the proceedings of the House, we shall not give the remainder in full. Our readers, however, need not regret this, as all the prominent features of the debate, and the principal arguments on both sides of the question, have been adduced in the Speeches already reported.]

MONDAY, February 23.

Mr. WATERS thought this a very important question; one in which was involved the interests of Responsible Government—of constitutional Government; and one which would tend either to throw the interests of the country and those principles of government back 50 years, or else insure their healthy and prosperous continuance; and he could not consequently allow the opportunity to pass without raising his voice against those who would cast off, throw away, and trample under foot the acknowledged constitution of the country.—Some gentlemen have complained of special pleading on the part of the opposition; but some of those very persons were the first to bolt out and drag in some of those side issues, (so called by the newspapers;) and it was to him perfectly amusing to notice the variety of pretexts and arguments with which the government and their friends endeavoured to mystify the true issues before the House.—They might have discussed and decided the question before the House entirely on the merits of the present government. But they had gone outside of the question, and travelled far back in order to find matter to suit their views. We (said Mr. Waters) may claim the same privilege, and we may travel back and see if we can find any antecedents of the present government which may assist us in forming correct conclusions as to their present elements, and what they had done to warrant our confidence.—He referred to the excitement which was created some 10 years since by the Governor's appointing a stranger to office. Then the whole country was thrown into a state of agitation, and the act of the governor was denounced as a fearful outrage. The time of the country was then wasted to gratify the selfishness of the compact men of the day. Then the people were outside in the ditch, and their interests were not thought of. But now it is a bold act to question the conduct of an administration, who confident in their power and reckless of consequences take the law in their teeth and snap their fingers in the people's face. The position of the House bore him out in the belief that the same men were actuated by the same principles which then influenced them. Former Government complained that they were turned out by fraud. But they found the Attorney General immediately by fraud attempting to turn out their successors. Fifty-six came. Then began a clamour by those who had always clamoured when out of office. When the House met they found the leader of the opposition, the present Attorney General, talking first to this man and then to that man. Bye and bye the war horn was sounded and the gauntlet thrown down. Why was it? why an out and out resolution of want

of confidence. A fortnight's discussion ensued, and the opposition failed. What then? they followed up the government at every move, and tried by every means in their power to embarrass the government without success. How strangely, said Mr. Waters do circumstances alter cases. Now the souls of those gentlemen (then in opposition) occupying the offices are filled with patriotism and magnanimity, and wrapping themselves up in their greatness, they say to the opposition—"Stand off you selfish office seekers—who, forgetting the interests of the people, and lost to every feeling of patriotism, become mere scramblers for office."

The Hon. Solicitor General had made some very sweeping assertions—including, in his charge of bribery, corruption, peculating, &c., the whole House; but he would challenge that hon. gentleman to point out those gentlemen who had been so guilty. He (Mr. W.) considered it a mean assertion, unfounded in facts. Some hon. gentlemen in the Government had no confidence; and never had any—in Responsible Government; they had grown grey in torpor, and clung to it with astonishing pertinacity. But others (the hon. Attorney General for instance,) were once thorough Responsible Government men, but unfortunately in bad company; and he must know that his companions were the same in heart as they were in those days when he (Attorney General) poured out his eloquence against them. The Solicitor General, he (Mr. W.) thought, did not believe in the liberal system of Government; his political associations had not been the best, and he had been brought up among those who did not entertain a particular regard for Responsible Government. When those persons made use of strong assertions descriptive of others, they were only portraying themselves.—Some hon. members expressed in strong terms their disapprobation of some other hon. gentleman who had voted differently from what the former wished. Thus one of the representatives from St. John had read a severe lecture to the hon. member from the City, (Mr. Harding); asking him how he dared to vote with the Opposition when he had been nominated with him, voted for with him, chaired with him, and returned with him, and that too to support the Governor, and of course the Government. And now said that hon. representative to his guilty colleague, "You have violated your pledges."

He (Mr. W.) would like to know when and where the limits came to an end? When those gentlemen who came to the House last July pledged to support the famed prerogative would be at liberty to exercise a free judgment and give an independent opinion with reference to the acts of the Government? or must this House and the country now and forever bow down to those men who had violated every principle of self-government? He considered the arguments advanced on the other side as ridiculous in the extreme—mere clap traps. He believed that hon. members—no matter under what pledges they came to the House in July—should approach the subject, and determine to judge the Government fairly and honestly, as the representatives and conservators of the public interests, by the healthy and cherished constitutional government which had already been acknowledged in this country. When he (Mr. W.) looked at the Government, and reflected upon the eclat with which they had assumed office; that they came in with the prestige of loyalty to the prerogative, by the loud acclamations of the people,—when he looked at them thus, and then turned and contemplated them as they were to-day, without a man to support them—in, he had almost said—a shameful minority; having lost the confidence of the people, who, the excitement of the moment past, now looked calmly into their conduct and declared them wanting; having sunk through their reckless and illegal course, into the most pitiable situation in which men could well be placed,—he felt for their fall and pitied their degradation.

With respect to the subject of Railroads, why he would ask had the House encumbered their Statutes with faulty acts, if the government could be allowed to act without any reference to Law? And he would say if this House by their vote countenance such illegal appropriation of the public funds, then they might as well do away with all legislation, all Responsible Government, all that is free or independent in our institutions.

The hon. Provincial Secretary said something about religious divisions. He (Mr. W.) did not know what this discussion had to do with religious divisions; those religious differences which had agitated the country in years past, had, he trusted, been buried in oblivion forever; and he (Mr. W.) would be one of the first to denounce any Government which would revive them.

The Prohibitory Law had been a great bugbear. But, he would ask, where were the men who stood by it, and fought for it, but whenever it became unpopular backed out and left the effects of their foul works behind them?

The Provincial Secretary had made a great discovery. Because, forsooth, some members of a Temperance organization had arrived in Fredericton, there was to be an immediate re-enactment of the Prohibitory Law; if so, perhaps that hon. gentleman would vote for it again, then vote against its repeal, and finally change his mind, and agree to wipe it off the Statute Book, as he had already done, for the moderate consideration of £600 a year. Believing, as he did, that the present Government did not nor ever could command the confidence of the people of this country, he would feel it his duty to vote against them.

Mr. FISHER said if no other gentleman wished to speak, he would offer a few remarks by way of a general reply. He would be however necessarily brief, for during the seven days debate upon the Amendment the various propositions put forth by hon. members had been so completely reviewed, that little remained to be said. He only desired to pick up a few crumbs which fell from hon. members' tables. There had been some discussion as to his right to reply. He did not value it much. It was the duty of mover of the Address to have given some exposition of the principles and measures

foreshadowed in the Speech, and which the Address required the House to acknowledge. The annals of the Colonial and Imperial Parliament furnished no case parallel to this. The practice of Parliament was for the mover and generally the seconder of the Address to offer some reasons, oftentimes known only to the government, to induce the House to assent to the various propositions of the Address. Such a course was due to the dignity of the Queen's Representative. It was due to the government, it was due to the House. He presumed the Government considered it indefensible, and had permitted it to be laid upon the table without note or comment. When the hon. mover spoke in the progress of the debate, he had assigned as the reason for this unusual course that he was to be followed by him (Mr. F.) and that he had refrained from offering any arguments as he knew they would be immediately demolished. The opposition had been charged with unfairness in bringing forward this motion, and by the very persons who pursued the same course last year. He had given full notice of the motion, and he believed the country generally would approve of it. In the estimation of the country the government was doomed, and whatever might be the actual decision, it would show that the government did not possess the confidence of the House, nor had it the sympathy of the people. Last year his learned friend the Attorney General arraigned the then government after only two hours notice. Now that the position is changed, he complains that they do not wait for measures. The country expected this discussion, and it would do good, if it was only on this measure that the people were enlightened. This debate and the arguments of hon. members would be read in all parts of the province, and the action of mind upon mind would only draw out the truth. What had created the change in the House since the short session in July? The silent and sure progress of public opinion,—the press and the telegraph communication with every hamlet in the Province,—and there was a deep undercurrent of public opinion, slow at first but sure and irresistible. The great majority of the people everywhere have declared against the government, and no sane man doubted that their days were numbered. Who governs now, the opposition really,—the government nominally. They have the emoluments of office, they have the patronage, they have the responsibility. We have the power. Take the first measure referred to in the speech, the Election Law. The opposition had moulded it to suit their own views. His hon. colleagues had proposed Universal Suffrage, or what was equivalent, the Commissioner of Works would give the Franchise to every resident of a certain time who paid taxes and could take a bite out of a loaf. The Solicitor General to every rate payer of a certain residence. It was of no consequence whether these were opinion of the Government or his colleague. The members lost their individuality when they joined the government. It appeared now from the Speech of the Attorney General that the Franchise was to be of the broadest character. What that was it did not exactly appear. This had been called a scramble for office, and by the very men who last year when out of office adopted the same course. Perhaps they spoke from the feeling that then actuated them. The Secretary had referred to his sitting modestly five years on the back benches not aspiring to office. He (Mr. F.) had always occupied the same seat and after eleven years of public service had been called to the Council and then stated that he did not wish office; that the advent of the Liberals to power should not be distinguished by a scramble for office. He had been engaged in all the important discussions upon Responsible Government from the time it was first mentioned in the province and there is still the old Tory cry, you are wasting the time of the country,—you injure our credit abroad, it is a mere scramble for office. When the craft was in danger they thought it was wrong to occupy time in discussing such matters. His experience of a political office did not not inspire him with any special desire for office, for the mere sake of the emoluments, but there were high public considerations influencing a public man to which he was not insensible.

He reciprocated the sentiment expressed by his learned colleague the Solicitor General that nothing said in this debate should create any personal difference. He was determined that it should not, they were the representatives of freemen, they were there freely to express their opinions. It was the privilege of Englishmen to differ, they would meet on the political arena and fight the matter out like men and after it was over unite together in the various relations of social life freed from any of the asperities of political or party strife.

Why should they fall out by the way? Very soon the actors in those scenes would pass away—ere long other men would occupy their places. He had been reflecting upon the past; he remembered when he first entered the House, a young man, about nineteen years ago, and amongst the forty gentlemen who now sat around those benches the only person he saw there then was the Speaker.—He turned to his right, to the hon. member for King's, and inquired where were the men that represented that County. He hoped and believed they were singing sweet anthems in the general Assembly of the just. He turned to the County of Carleton, and where were his old friends who then sat there: they rest from their labours and their works do follow them. Looking all around the House, he enquired where were they, and it appeared that a few held important positions in the country, but, in the language of the poet, "some had crossed the flood and some were crossing now." Some hon. members on the other side had referred to the time occupied in this discussion. He believed very little time had been lost—that about the usual routine business had been transacted during the progress of the Debate, but if it occupied as many weeks as days it would be time well employed. Questions and principles of vast moment were involved in the discussion, and he believed the true course was to know and secure their

rights and privileges before they considered their material interest. Of what value was land or timber, or cattle, without liberty. What was it that made England the centre of civilization and Christianity? her free institutions. From her was diffused moral, intellectual and religious light to the very ends of the earth. Her flags floated on every sea and her sons were foremost in every enterprise. We desire to secure for our country and our children the same blessing. It was said of a Roman king that he found the walls of Rome of brick and left them of marble: let it be said of us that we found our institutions defective, and improved them—our country ruled by a little knot of individuals and we left it free to all—office and honour open to the sons of the poor as well as to the rich.—Great opposition had been evinced by the Government to the present Election Law and he was only surprised it had been so far worked out. He was informed that the Press in the interest of the Government had foreshadowed a measure for Universal Suffrage. His hon. colleague had advocated it, and it was rumored that the Bill had been printed. (Hon. Surveyor General said the Election Law had never been discussed in his presence.) No doubt of it. The measures of the Government were discussed by sections. It appeared that when the Railroad Expenditure in St. John was determined upon the Commissioner of the works was at Musquash. He supposed when the Election was discussed the Surveyor General was in Restigouche.—They surely did not wish the House to believe that the most prominent point in His Excellency's Speech was intended to mean nothing, and that the answer, in which a measure to secure the fair representation of the people was referred to, was merely to deceive the House; he presumed the measure, whatever it was, had received the sanction of the Government. It would now never see the light.—He (Mr. F.) was opposed to Universal Suffrage.—He did not believe it was adapted to the genius of their institutions. In the adjoining Republic they had recently an instance of the working of Universal Suffrage. Look at Kansas, where that system so much admired by the members of the Government prevailed, and by the very system of Universal Suffrage, the free men of Kansas had been outvoted by the hordes from Missouri who rushed to the polls for the purpose of perpetuating slavery.—They knew he was called blue nose, but he had English blood and English feelings. He loved the land and Government of his fathers. Their form of Government contains the three principles of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and democracy, what Montesquieu had described as virtue, honour and power. It was the mingling together for ages of these principles that made such a beautiful whole. Nothing had tended more to perpetuate the freedom of Britain than the maintenance of the Aristocratic elements. Every one who has taken a philosophical view of our institutions, who has studied the philosophy of history, must be satisfied of this. When France, in the reign of Louis Philippe, abolished the hereditary Peerage, it was evident that a severe blow had been given to freedom. Look at France now, with its Universal Suffrage. No freedom of mind or action—it is now one of the most despotic countries in Europe. In 1848, when the European dynasties were crumbling to atoms, and the Kings and potentates of Europe were being swept away before the Revolutionary tornado, Britain remained calm and erect in the midst of the political storm which excited the nations of the earth. She stood forth as the beacon light to all lands in the political wilderness of this world; she was the only refuge of the oppressed, the very sanctuary of freedom.

He believed the Government were blameable for not carrying out the Election Law. If the people had done their part in their primary assemblies, and had elected the necessary officers; if the Government had directed the Clerks of the Peace and Sheriffs to assist and instruct these officers, and had circulated the law in June instead of September,—he believed there would have been little failure. It was objected that the law was loose and defective. Hon. members could not show it. The same objection had been made by the same party to the simultaneous Bill when it first passed; yet it had worked well ever since, and had not been amended. The hon. member from the City of St. John said numbers were disfranchised there. It so happened that the qualification under the old law and the new was the same. [Here Mr. F. read the old law, by which it appeared that, to entitle a freeman to vote, he must have been registered six months, and possessed of personal estate to the value of twenty-five pounds. Under the new law, every freeman assessed in the sum of twenty-five pounds must be inserted in the register, and could vote; so that the new law was more favorable than the old.] His learned friend from Restigouche had complained that it disfranchised many; no person really qualified under the old law was disfranchised. He remembered, in the scrutiny of Boyd and Fitzgerald, an heir had voted, whose ancestor, it appeared, owned a pile of rocks lying beyond a lake; and it was proved that the field of rocks was not worth five shillings: and yet, as the heir, he had an interest in real estate, and it was decided to be a good vote;—and this is the system so much admired! The present law regarded property as the basis, but extended it to all kinds of property, real or personal. In the first settlement of the country the freehold qualification was the best; now, to adapt it to the present state of society, it was necessary to extend it to personal property. Lord John Russell, in his proposed Reform Bill, had adopted the same course. He only desired to give the law a fair trial; he believed it would vindicate its own character. The registration was the most important, and, he believed, was of the simplest and easiest kind. There had been no difficulty in York; and the expense was some sixty pounds, and the Warden informed him that it could be done next year for half the amount. They all knew that a scrutiny cost the parties hundreds, besides the loss of the time of the House. His learned friend from