

curiosity by a quiet declaration of his desire to avail himself of the privacy of the ballot, and it enables those more nearly connected with each other to express silently their differences of opinion: it is therefore amicable. It leaves a man open to all the appeals of reason and of argument: it is therefore rational. It is used as the mode of election for the officers and managers of an infinite variety of societies: it is therefore practicable.

From all these preceding considerations it would appear that voting by ballot may justly and emphatically be characterised as fair, rational, protective, amicable, and conducive to moral and peaceable conduct, efficient for every elective purpose, and almost innocent of all evil. It might, therefore, be safely recommended and proposed for its own inherent merits; but it has also the additional recommendation that it is in accordance with the innate and undoubted right of every man to his own opinion, for which he is responsible to none but his own conscience only; and there seems to be no mode, except that of the ballot, which could in all cases secure to a voter the unmolested enjoyment of this most sacred right.

There may possibly remain in your Lordship's mind one objection to the introduction of the ballot into New Zealand on the ground that it would become a precedent. It may be readily admitted that it would be a great experiment to make amidst the mass of poverty and discontent which pervades the old countries, and that it would there meet with the strong opposition of a great variety of vested interests which are now able to retain their supremacy by the influence which they are able to exert over all classes of constituents by means of the principle of open voting; but the introduction of the ballot into New Zealand would scarcely amount to a precedent for such other places, as there is, in fact, no similarity in the cases, inasmuch as there are here neither vested interests nor even as yet any party spirit beyond what casually arises with each temporary occasion; but instead a clear and undisturbed field for the experiment to be tried—an experiment which would operate solely amongst small and isolated communities, consisting chiefly of members of the working classes in a state of great comfort and independence and desirous of living together in peace and of keeping at a distance all the elements of strife, amongst which political collision is one of the foremost.

The term of years recommended in the sixth resolution as that of the duration of the Parliament of New Zealand is suggested in consequence of the very frequent additions to the population of the respective communities and the consequent alterations in the affairs and circumstances of each. With respect to the powers to be conferred upon the Legislature, your Lordship will perceive that, on all questions not affecting the prerogatives of the Crown or being Imperial questions, it is requested that the Parliament of New Zealand shall be subject to no extra-colonial control, and that the power of vetoing any Acts relative to local questions only shall be vested in the Governor, who shall signify his assent or the contrary to such Acts before the close of each session. We are aware that your Lordship has stated your belief that it would be a difficult matter to separate the questions merely local from those affecting the empire at large, and we can understand how this belief has come to be entertained. The practice of legislating in London for the wants of a vast empire, extending over so many different regions, has had the effect of inducing the belief that it was necessary that all questions, affecting even the minutest circumstances in any portion of that empire, should be brought before the notice of the Imperial Ministry, without remembering the fact that most of these local questions, though relating to what was strictly a portion of the empire, yet did not clash with or in any way affect any other portion of it; that, in short, the operation of any laws passed in any colony and not having effect out of that colony began and ended where such laws were enacted; and consequently the decision as to what these laws should be ought reasonably to be left to those who alone were affected by them, and who, from that very fact, must be supposed to be the best judges of their necessity or the contrary; while the attempt to direct, at such a remote distance, and on the very conflicting and meagre information which, owing to the distance and infrequency of communication, can be obtained by any Ministry, the attention of the respective Legislatures to the facts and requirements of their own country, of which they are much more fully informed, could only result, as hitherto has been the case, in producing disappointment equally to the Ministry who seek to instruct and to those who are sought to be instructed, and thus sowing the seeds of dissension, recrimination, and hostility between the Mother-country and those who, by habit, ties of blood, individual prejudices, and historical associations, are desirous of regarding the nation from which they are proud to have sprung with feelings of unmixed affection. We are disposed most fully to allow that your Lordship is desirous, to the utmost of your power, to legislate for New Zealand in that manner which may appear for the good of the colony; but we cannot admit that any Minister residing in Great Britain is in a position to learn what that good may be; and with no one conviction are we so fully impressed as with this: that, unless the New Zealand Legislature possesses the same powers of legislation as respects New Zealand, with the exception of the relations of the colony with foreign States, as those possessed by the Sovereign and Parliament of the United Kingdom, it might more appropriately be styled by another name, and will decidedly be regarded as a mockery of the idea of a Legislature fitted to rule over Englishmen; and will only cease to be such when, after much contention which might otherwise have been avoided, it has been remodelled to that form which alone the colonists will be content with. It follows necessarily that foremost among the powers sought to be obtained is that of altering the future Constitution itself upon the nature of which the acts of the Legislature will so entirely depend. We are encouraged to hope that this power will be at once granted by your Lordship, as we observed that it was contained in the 32nd clause of the Australian Colonies Government Bill; and it was with great regret that we learned that this clause was struck out in the third reading of that Bill in the House of Lords. That the powers claimed in the resolution in question are deemed just and suitable ones to be possessed by a colonial Legislature we have the evidence of the Report, previously alluded to, of the Lords of Council for Trade and Plantations, to the following extracts from which we beg to refer: "We should think it prudent, if we thought it practicable, to confine the proposed Act to those provisions which are necessary for constituting Legislatures in the four colonies in question—viz., New South Wales, Victoria, Van Diemen's Land, and South Australia, and for enabling those Legislatures to perform the duties to which they will be called; for we contemplate with great reluctance any departure from the