

I think we have a right to ask this in return for the protection which we afford to the colonies. I now come to the question as to the mode of governing our colonies. I think that, as a general rule, we cannot do better than refer to those maxims of policy by which our ancestors were guided upon this subject. It appears to me, that in providing that wherever Englishmen went they should enjoy English freedom (hear, hear), and have English institutions (hear, hear), they acted justly and wisely. They adopted a course which was calculated to promote a harmonious feeling between the mother country and the colonies, and which enabled those who went out to these distant possessions to sow the seeds of communities of which England may always be proud. (Hear, hear.) Well, Sir, let us see how we stand on this subject. I have here a declaration with regard to our colonial policy, signed by a number of gentlemen, comprising I think some 12 or 14 members of this house, and some three or four peers, members of the other house of Parliament. I think the course taken by these gentlemen, of forming themselves into an association, and corresponding with the colonies, is a measure of very dubious policy. (Loud and general cries of Hear.) I conceive that, in their character of members of the House of Commons or of the House of Lords, they might fairly declare what were their views and opinions, and that they might suffer the Government either to agree to, or to show reason for dissenting from the policy they recommended. If they had done that, I certainly should have made no complaint of their proceedings, nor do I now wish to enter further into that subject. I observe that with regard to general principles, having expressed sentiments not very different from those I have just stated, they proceed to say,—"The Council are therefore of opinion that it is right and expedient to delegate to all the British Colonies whose population has been mainly formed, or is being still augmented by emigration from this country, full authority to administer their own affairs. That the colonies which are at present entitled to self-government, are the North American Colonies, the South African Colonies, the Australian Colonies, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand. To these colonies the Council have determined to limit their operations in the first instance." Now I will take these colonies in the order in which the association has mentioned them, and I will state what has been and is the policy of the present Government with regard to them. Of the North American Colonies, I will take, in the first place, Canada. Up to 1828, there were very grave dissensions between the Ministers of the Crown in this country, and the Canadian people. The Government of this country thought themselves justified in applying the taxes of Canada without the authority or consent of the inhabitants of the colony. Mr. Huskisson proposed an inquiry into that subject. Parliament for a long time turned its attention to the matter. Commissions were sent out, committees were appointed, but in the end, an insurrection broke out in Canada, and blood was shed both in the upper and lower provinces. The Government, of which I was a member, thought it necessary, for a time, to suspend the constitution of the colony. We afterwards proposed the union of the two provinces, and also to give the colony ample powers of legislation. Now, in establishing that kind of Government in so important a Province, a question arose, which I trust, has been solved to the satisfaction of the people of Canada, although it is one which could not be solved in the same manner in a province of less importance and of less extensive population. The popular party in Canada proposed that they should have what they call responsible government—namely, that not only should there be a legislature freely elected, but that instead of what had become the custom, that the Ministry should be named by the Governor General totally irrespective of the prevailing opinions of the Legislature, they should be taken from that party in the Assembly which was supported by a majority. That plan was adopted.

During the time when Lord Glenelg held the Colonial Secretaryship, Mr. Baldwin, who I believe is now in office in Canada, came to this country. Lord Glenelg informed me that, for particular reasons, he could not see Mr. Baldwin, but he wished me to see him and to hear his statement. I met Mr. Baldwin. My opinion when I met him was that I should very widely disagree with him, and his opinion probably was that he would very widely differ from me; but, after a long conversation, and mutual explanations, we came to a result which was nearly one of entire agreement with respect to the government of Canada. (Hear, hear.) That government has been conducted of late years in conformity with what Her Majesty's Ministers believe to be the opinion of the people of Canada. When Lord Elgin saw that the Ministry he had found in office had narrow majorities in the Assembly, he proposed either that they should continue in office until there was some adverse vote, or that they should dissolve the Assembly. They preferred to dissolve the Assembly. The new Assembly which was returned gave a great majority to their adversaries, and Lord Elgin placed their adversaries in office. I do not think, therefore, that it would be possible to carry out more fairly or more fully the principle of allowing the province to manage its own affairs. I have, however, seen bitter complaints on this subject; and I have seen that some persons have even gone the length of proposing that, instead of remaining subject to Her Majesty, the province of Canada should be annexed to the United States. To that proposal, of course, the Crown could give nothing but a decided negative [loud cheers]; and I trust, although such a suggestion has been made, that, from the characters of several of the gentlemen who are members of the association, it is not their intention to push their project of joining a neighbouring state to the ultimate result of endeavouring by force

of arms to effect a separation from Great Britain; but that, knowing the determined will of the Sovereign of this country and of her advisers not to permit that project to be carried into effect, they will acquiesce in the decision of the Crown. [Hear, hear, and cheers.] I wonder, at the same time, that any persons who profess loyalty to the Sovereign should have entertained a project which, if unfortunately any inter-national difference occurred between this country and the United States of America, might have placed them in the position of raising their arms against British authority, and of fighting against the British flag. [Hear, hear.] Such, then, is the condition of Canada. If the present Ministry in Canada are sustained by popular opinion—and I believe the late elections that have taken place in the recess in Canada rather show that they will be—if they are sustained by public opinion and by the Assembly, they will remain in office; if, on the contrary, the opinion of the province shall be adverse to them, the Governor-General will take other advisers, and he will act strictly according to the rule that has been adopted here. [Hear, hear.] With respect, likewise, to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, no very long time ago the Executive Council was the same body as the Legislative Council, and there was no separate Legislative Council; but—I think it was when Lord Glenelg held the seals of office, I am not quite sure of that, but not many years ago—a change was made, and the Councillors have been chosen, if not from a particular party, in such a manner as to conciliate the opinion of the province, and to command the support of a majority of the Legislature for Nova Scotia and for New Brunswick. We have not heard of late years of those unhappy dissensions which used to prevail when the Executive Councillors of the Government found themselves in a small minority in the Assembly.

With respect to Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, the principle which these gentlemen wish to have carried into execution has been carried into effect; and I should say that the consequence has been, and must be, that there have been far fewer questions brought before the Secretary of State than there used to be. (Hear, hear.) That in regard to many questions of official conduct or misconduct, with regard to many local affairs in which it could be nothing but a difficulty and embarrassment for the Colonial Secretary to be called upon to decide (hear, hear), he hears not a word; they are settled in the province (hear, hear); the Governor informing him about them if he thinks they are of importance. The Government is carried on therefore with less resort to this country than used to be the case. (Hear, hear.) I will now advert to the South African colonies. The chief of these is the Cape of Good Hope. With respect to the Cape of Good Hope, there has been of late years a discussion with regard to the introduction of representative government; Lord Stanley had that question under his consideration; and without at all refusing the introduction of representative government, he pointed out many difficulties which had to be considered before the decision was ultimately come to. Those difficulties, and indeed every topic connected with the subject, have been discussed in the Cape by the Governor and his advisers, by the Colonial Secretary, the Chief Justice, and others, who are fully competent to form an opinion from their general knowledge of the principles of government, and likewise from their local knowledge of the interests of the colony; and the result is, that Her Majesty's Government have come to the decision that representative institutions should be introduced at the Cape. (Hear, hear.) With respect to the Representative Assembly, they have adopted a franchise, into the particulars of which I shall not now enter, for the papers are in the hands of members, enabling them to judge of the proposal; but a representative assembly will be chosen by persons having a certain amount of property and qualified in the manner which has been specified. But a question arose as to the formation of what is called in other colonies the Legislative Council; and, upon the whole, Her Majesty's Government came to the opinion, that instead of imitating the constitution of Jamaica or that of Canada, it would be advisable to introduce into the Cape of Good Hope a council which should be elective (hear, hear), but elected by persons having a considerably higher qualification than those who are the choosers of the Representative Assembly. These, it was considered, might be persons who had been named by the Crown as persons of weight and influence, as magistrates and others, persons who had been selected by municipal councils as persons entitled to the highest offices which they could confer. It is proposed that the Representative Assembly should have a duration of five years, and the Legislative Council a duration of ten years, but half to be elected at the expiration of five years. Something like a constitution of this kind, though differing in some very remarkable particulars, is now in operation in Belgium, where, instead of having a hereditary council, there is an elective council, which I think has a duration of eight years, but half being elected at the expiration of every four years. Of course this experiment is new, and it would be presumptuous to say that it will entirely succeed; but the order in council having been passed for the purpose of its general introduction, that order and the instructions founded thereupon will be sent out to the Cape, and any amendments with regard to the details which have been settled here may be considered at the Cape before the measure obtains its final sanction. (Hear, hear.)

Sir, the next colonies to which these gentlemen refer are the Australian colonies, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand. Now, with regard to Australia, the Bill which I have to ask that the chairman should obtain leave to bring in, will propose legislation by Parliament upon that subject. The measure which I propose,