

and which is nearly the same as one that was proposed last year, goes not on the principle of having a Council and Assembly, as hitherto, in imitation of the Government of this country, has been usually the form most palatable and popular in our colonies; but it is proposed that there should be but one council, a council of which two thirds shall be formed of representatives elected by the people, and one third named by the Governor. The reason for adopting this proposal is, that after a great deal of deliberation, that plan was adopted, some years ago, and, I think, was finally enacted by Parliament in 1842; and since that time has been found so acceptable to the people of New South Wales, that upon the whole, as far as we could ascertain their sentiments, they appear to prefer that form of popular government to that which is more in analogy with the government of this country. [Hear, hear, and a cry of No.] Well, for my part, I can only say that we have been anxious to adopt that form which was the most agreeable to the views of the colony [hear], and that if in New South Wales there had been a clear and prevalent opinion that it was advisable to leave their present constitution and to adopt the form of council and assembly, the Government would have been quite ready to take that course [hear], and that the committee of the council to which this question was referred, would have proposed that constitution. [Hear, hear.] I should say, speaking upon that subject, with regard to these questions of colonial government, that upon all the great principles of government, and which are to decide with respect to the welfare of the colony for a considerable time to come, as well as with regard to questions in which there is any peculiar difficulty, my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies has considered it advisable to refer these questions to a committee of Privy Council, on which my Lord Campbell, Sir Edward Ryan, and my right honorable friend near me, the President of the Board of Control, have constantly sat, and given their mature attention to the subject. [Hear.] I believe that that is a very advisable plan, and that it enables the Secretary of State to discuss with others the various reasons for the propositions that may be made, and ultimately to come to better decision than if he had to decide alone upon questions of this order. [Hear, hear.] But when we propose that this shall be the form of Government for New South Wales, I should add that we propose likewise to give the colony the power of altering their own constitution in that respect [hear, hear], and that if it should be their opinion that they had better resort to a government by Legislative Council and Assembly, there would be no veto, no restriction on the part of the Crown, against the adoption of that course. [Hear, hear.] With respect to other matters, there is a change, though not a very considerable change, in the Bill as it was first proposed last year; for we then proposed that the Customs duties which now prevail in New South Wales should be enacted by Parliament for the whole of the Australian colonies, and should be binding till they were altered by the proper authorities. We have thought that although it is a most desirable object that the Customs duties should not vary in the different Australian colonies, it is not advisable to enact that by authority of Parliament, but that it is better to leave them to settle for themselves whether they will not adopt a similar tariff for all the various parts of Australia. [Hear, hear.] We propose that the Port Philip district should be separated from New South Wales, and that it should likewise have its council; and that there should likewise be introduced in Van Diemen's Land, where it has not existed before, a popular element into the Legislative Council, forming that council upon the same principle as the others, and that in South Australia there should be a similar body. [Hear.] We propose, likewise, that on the proposition of two of these colonies, there should be an assembly of these different Australian councils, that they should have the power of (as we understood) framing the same tariff for all, and that they should have various other powers which we think might be found useful, to pervade the whole of these colonies. [Hear.] To that body, likewise, we propose to refer the power of dealing with that question, which is so important to our Australian colonies—the price of the waste lands. After many arrangements upon that subject, Parliament enacted, in 1842, that 20s. an acre should be the price fixed for waste lands in New South Wales and the Australian colonies, and that that price should not be capable of alteration. Now, we think it would be a great mischief that that price should be altered in one of these colonies, and remain the same in the others; that there should be a bidding by one colony against another for the purpose of procuring immigrants [hear, hear], very much depreciating the value of waste lands [hear, hear], and we therefore propose that if an alteration should be made, it should be an alteration that should extend to the whole. [Hear.]

I do not know that I need enter further into the description of this bill, because the bill itself was in the hands of members at the end of last session; as I have said, there are no great alterations from what was then proposed, and in a few days I trust members will again have the bill in their hands, and they can canvass its contents. But I have stated enough to show that both in the North American colonies and in the Australian it is our disposition to introduce representative institutions, [hear, hear,] to give full scope to the will of the people of those colonies, [hear, hear,] and thereby to enable them to work their way to their own prosperity [hear, hear,] far better than if they were controlled and regulated by any ordinances that went from this country. [Hear, hear.] With respect to New Zealand, we began very soon, in 1846, showing at least a disposition for representative institutions; showing perhaps too much haste in the manner in which we adopted them; but we begun by enacting a bill for the purpose of having representative

institutions in New Zealand. The very able Governor of that colony [hear] pointed out the difference which exists between the native race of New Zealand and any of those native races with which the British people had hitherto had to deal, whether in North America, whether at the Cape of Good Hope, or whether in New Holland and Van Diemen's Land. He pointed out their capacity for civilization; he pointed out how ill they would brook the interference and government of a small number of persons of English race, who should have the sole legislative authority over them. His objections, when they reached this country, were felt by my noble friend and by the Government to be founded in reason,—founded in his knowledge of the people among whom he dwelt, and whom he was commissioned to govern; and we therefore proposed to suspend that constitution. The Governor now writes that he has introduced a legislative council in the southern part of New Zealand, [hear]; he writes also that it is his opinion that at the expiration of the term fixed by Parliament representative institutions can safely and usefully be introduced into New Zealand. [Hear, hear.] Therefore, believing his opinion to be well founded, we propose only to wait for any further representations from him as to any alterations that should be made in the act which passed with respect to New Zealand, and with regard to time, to introduce those alterations, that the constitution may be put into operation at the time which has been already fixed by Parliament. [Hear, hear.] I believe I have now gone through all the colonies for which the gentlemen of this association, who are called "The Council," think it necessary to claim free institutions. They say "they abstain, for the present, from offering any opinion as to the government of those dependencies in which the mass of the population is composed of the coloured races, such as the West India Islands, Mauritius, and Ceylon; and they consider that military stations, such as Malta, Gibraltar, &c., ought not to be considered colonies, and need not necessarily be governed as such." Now, I must say, whatever may be the justice of the opinions contained in the former part of their representations, that they show great moderation in the views they thus express. [Hear, hear.] I will, however, state, with regard to some of the West India Islands and some other colonies, what has been done, and is proposed to be done. With regard to those colonies which I mentioned in the commencement of what I addressed to the house—Barbadoes, and Jamaica, and those other colonies—they have for a long time enjoyed there government by council and assembly; and although such institutions led from time to time to differences between the Governor and the Assembly, I do not think that with regard to them there is likely to be any permanent disagreement or any evil result. It is evident, with regard to Jamaica, for instance, although the Assembly was disposed to press an immediate reduction in the judges' salaries, which we could not think to be just, yet that the very reasonable opposition made in the Council, and the able speech of the Chief Justice in the Council, have produced a great effect in that Island; and it does not appear that they will press any great reductions but those they can make with justice. [Hear.] I believe the reduction already made will amount to about £70,000 on the expenditure of the island. [Hear.] With regard to another colony, with respect to which there has been an examination by a select committee of this house—with regard to British Guiana—when Mr. Barkly was about to proceed to take the government of that island, I begged to see him; I told him that from my impression, both at the time I was at the Colonial Office and since, I thought that the government of the colony was placed in the hands of a species of oligarchy; that I did not make any alteration when I was Secretary of State, seeing that the change from slavery to freedom had lately taken place, but that I begged his instant attention to the subject, and that he would inform me whether he did not think the constitution might be amended—and, above all, that there must be a wider basis for the Financial Council of the island. [Hear, hear.]

I will not detain the house with references to the Combined Court and the College of Financial Representatives, or other bodies, but will only say that I received a very able letter from Governor Barkly upon the subject, and that, so far as the extension of the franchise is concerned, he proposed that there should be an extension, and he carried a measure for that purpose. New elections have taken place, and, though the electors have not been so numerous as it is expected they will be hereafter, there was a much greater body of electors for representatives than ever before. [Hear, hear.] A question has been raised with regard to the salary of the Governor of Guiana; and this, I think, is an instance how far it is easy for gentlemen to carry into effect the principle they are quite ready to assert, namely, that the colonies ought to be allowed to manage their own affairs, and that without there is a clear and absolute necessity we ought not to interfere in that management. The salary of the Governor is some £5,000 a-year; it is a question with the colony whether they think or do not think it ought to be continued. The Government has said it is for them to dispose of that question. Many might say—if I were an inhabitant of the colony I should be disposed to say—that, having a considerable expenditure, it is far better to give a very sufficient salary; that they are more likely to obtain those to undertake the affairs of the colony who are competent for the task by giving a large and liberal salary, than if they make a limit below such an amount; others might say that this is excessive, and ought to be considerably reduced. But this, I think, is clear, that as it is an expenditure from the funds of British Guiana, it is for the representatives of British Guiana, and not for the House of Commons,