

question in this House that it must to some extent partake of a personal character; it must almost mean a vote of want of confidence in Government officials. The smallness of the community reduces it almost to a question amongst individuals, and as the Government Members have been placed, unnecessarily and inexpediently, as I think, to some extent upon their defence, I must speak plainly on some points, but in doing so I must deprecate any idea of giving offence. I say, then, that Responsible Government is not desirable, and is not applicable to this Colony at present; is practically unworkable. And here I would deprecate the impression which is being so studiously instilled into the people of this Colony concerning what has been said of the unfitness of the Colony for Responsible Government. His Excellency the Governor has never said, nor has any member of the Government ever said, that the people are unfit, individually, to govern themselves. I say that, man for man, this community will compare favourably with any people on this coast. ["Hear, hear," from the Attorney-General.] Nor is it even the smallness of the population that I consider to be the great objection, although I admit that this is a drawback; but it is the scattered character of that population. It would be practically impossible to organize electoral districts so that they should properly represent the interests of the separate parts, and of the whole Colony. As Victoria is the centre of wealth, and intelligence also, if you will, under present circumstances the Government would be centralized in the hands of Victorians, who would thus rule the Colony, and this would be objectionable ["Hear, hear," from Mr. Holbrook]; and I say also that there would be a great difficulty in getting proper representatives to represent the respective districts. I do not agree with the Hon. Member who has stated that only the chaff of the people is blown into this House; for I say, Sir, that this Council, constituted as it is, has proved that men fit to represent the people do come here. Responsible Government will come as a matter of course when the community is fit for it; but that form of government is not fitted for communities in their infancy. It has never been so considered. Look abroad into the world and you will find large populations without Responsible Government. There is no necessity to look far off to see whether the Anglo-Saxon race must necessarily have Responsible Government. Look across the Straits, where there is a population of, I suppose, 30,000 people, and there they have neither Responsible Government nor representative institutions. Look at Oregon, also with no representation until the population exceeded 45,000. Look at the Red River Settlement, also with a population larger than ours; they do not apply for Responsible Government. It does not follow, according to the rule of Anglo-Saxon minds, that this form of government must prevail. I do not think the sort of responsibility which is advocated would be suitable to this Colony at present, or would promote its true interests. If I did think it desirable I should be found amongst its most cordial advocates, as this is a matter open for discussion without Government direction. But I think, Sir, that our present form of Government is practically a more real responsibility to the people than that proposed by the Hon. Member for New Westminster; this form which the Hon. Member for Lillooet finds it so easy to animadvert upon. For we are in reality, if not directly, responsible to the people. We, as servants of the Crown, are directly and immediately responsible to the Governor, and the Governor is responsible to the Queen, who is the guardian of the people's rights. This is no mere idea, for the fact of responsibility has been, over and over again, proved. If you have any good grounds of complaint you know where to lay them and get redress. This responsibility which we owe is more real, less fluctuating, less open to doubtful influences, and under it the rights of the whole country are secured and protected, and not those of the majority, to the prejudice of the minority, as under the so-called Responsible Government, which really means Party Government, advocated so warmly by the Hon. Member for New Westminster. Why, Sir, the Hon. Member has admitted to you that under that system the Government of the day might come down to pass measures by unfair means.

Hon. Mr. ROBSON—No. I made use of no such words; what were my words?

Hon. CHIEF COMMISSIONER—The Hon. Member said, and I took down his words, "that under Responsible Government the Government might come down to the House and carry measures by means not excessively fair." I say that this cannot occur under the present system; that no corruption can be charged against this Government. I think the House is capable of being remodelled. I would rather see a larger element of representative government in this Council, with such a majority that the Government would have no opportunity of passing a measure objectionable to the people, as understood by their representatives; such a majority as I advocated in a resolution submitted to this Council. But the Hon. Members