

is the fashion for Honourable Members to say that the Government of this or any other community are bound to govern according to the well understood wishes of the people; that the *vox populi* is the *vox dei*; that Ministries and Governments are responsible to the people. But the true principle, as we all very well know, is that Governments and Ministries are responsible, not to the people as a populace, but to the representatives of the people, properly and reasonably chosen. Governments and Ministries are responsible, not to numerical majorities, but to the country. Now, Sir, representative institutions are liable to this obvious and well-known danger. I will quote the words of a well-known political writer, Herbert Spencer: "Whenever the profit accruing to the representative individually, from the passage of a mischievous measure, largely exceeds his loss as a unit in the community from the operation of the injurious law, his interest becomes antagonistic to that of his constituents, and sooner or later will sway his vote." How true and how obvious this is. I might go further, when the private and personal, the direct and immediate, interest of the representative or of the constituents, whose advocates and delegates they are, is opposed to any matter of legislative action, the direct and material interest will, of a certainty, prevail over the distant and more remote welfare of the community, in all but very rare instances. This is the danger that threatens all representative institutions, and the only safeguard against it is the qualification—the pecuniary and material qualification of the representative, the pecuniary and material qualification of the elector; and, accordingly, we see representative institutions flourishing and successful only when this safeguard practically exists. Let us turn to the example of England. In England representative institutions and Responsible Government work smoothly—and why? Because of the notoriously aristocratic and plutocratic character of the Legislature of Great Britain. Political life is a sealed book to any but the wealthy classes. Every member of Parliament is a man of property; no other can afford the luxury of legislative life; and society is secure in the hands of representatives whose property would suffer from the results of vicious or reckless legislation. I say nothing of the question of peace and war, probably the most momentous and disastrous subject of vicious and reckless legislation, a question which will not arise in the Colony. The cream of all legislation is taxation, and my solid conviction is that representative institutions and Responsible Government will fail whenever the working majority is in the hands of an unsubstantial class of representatives or of electors. I have thus, Sir, treated of representative institutions and Responsible Government somewhat in the abstract. I will now refer more particularly to its application to this Colony, and this apart from any question of Confederation; and I will repeat that I am in favour of the extension to the utmost possible limits of the representative elements of this Council, but adverse to Responsible Government. With respect to the constitution of the Legislative Council of British Columbia, it might, I think, hardly be necessary, in the present condition of the Colony, to advocate a second chamber—a Council as distinct from an Assembly. However advisable this may be in an advanced condition of the Colony, advanced in numbers and wealth, few, if any, would advocate such an institution as a second chamber. The elements for forming such a chamber are sadly wanting in the present state of affairs, and the matter may be dismissed without further comment—without discussing the advisability in a general way of such an institution at all, or the constitutional elements of such a body. But with regard to the Legislature on the supposition of its consisting of one single House, it will be necessary to speak at somewhat greater length. Of what elements ought such a legislative body to consist? At present it consists of official members, heads of departments; official members not heads of departments, but representing, for the most part, different magisterial districts; a few nominated members—nominated, I think it is reasonable to presume, from an impression of their being tolerably intelligent and moderate; and a few representative members. It is asked whether the constitution of this Council should be altered so as to establish direct Responsible Government, or what may be looked upon almost as its equivalent, a large working majority of responsible members. I leave out of the question at present all reference to any modification of the constitution of the Council in the event of Confederation, and I consider the matter at present only in reference to the Council and the Colony in their actual condition. At present it is obvious, and must be felt by all of us, by official members no less than by independent members, that our position as a Crown Colony is what is commonly called a *false position*. We are individually as well fitted for self-government as our brothers or our cousins in the Old Country or in Canada. I will go further: I will say that the community, taken individually, in this Colony is *better* qualified to demand and have repre-