

because I conceive it not only to be the right of the people, but their interest also. We are constantly told that we should not have mixed this question up with the terms. We have not mixed it up with the terms; but the Government has mixed the terms up with it; and if there is any blame, any responsibility in this connection, it must rest with the Government, and not with the Opposition. The Hon. gentleman tells us that it is impossible to work Responsible Government with a population so scattered; and in the same breath he tells us that we have Responsible Government now,—that the officials are responsible to the Governor, and he to the Queen. Well, certainly, this is a sort of responsibility; but it is not precisely the kind we want. The responsibility now existing takes the wrong direction. It is not responsibility to the people, but to the supreme power. In this sense the most despotic form of government in the world may be termed Responsible Government. The members of the Government of the Czar of Russia are responsible to him, and he is responsible to the Great Ruler of all; ergo, Russia has Responsible Government! The Hon. gentleman must see the absurdity of his startling proposition. He next tells us that if the people desire Responsible Government it is because they have been educated up to it by the press. There is more truth than argument in this. Doubtless the press is in this, as in other civilized countries, the great educator of the people, especially in matters political. Have not the people of England been similarly educated up to every great political reform? Such constitutes a legitimate and important function of the press. But the honourable gentleman goes further and tells us that if the present Government is unpopular with the people the responsibility rests with the press, which has by misrepresentation created prejudice in the public mind. This proposition I beg most unqualifiedly to deny. The honourable gentleman has confounded cause and effect. The press has opposed the Government because it is unpopular; and the Government is unpopular because it is not a people's Government—because it does not possess the principle of responsibility to the people. It must be remembered that the press subsists on popular favour; and in order to subsist it must oppose an unpopular form of Government. The press of this Colony has acted rather as the exponent than the moulder and leader of public opinion in its opposition to the present form of Government. As I have repeatedly said, it is not the officials that are unpopular, so much as the system under which they administer. No officials can be popular under such a system. It places them in a false position. The press is, therefore, not to blame; it is the faithful exponent of public opinion. The honourable gentleman on my left [Mr. Holbrook] dissents from this view. It is the habit of some honourable gentlemen to affect to sneer at the press of this Colony. They admit that the press of England is all I claim for it; but they allude sneeringly to the press of this Colony. Now, I am free to admit that the leading journal of this Colony would lose by a comparison with the leading journal of England. It is smaller, and, perhaps, less ability is displayed in its editorial columns. But would not such a comparison be unfair? Apply this rule to other institutions of the Colony and what would be the result? Taking the press of this Colony with all its imperfections, and I boldly assert that it will compare favourably with that of any other country of like age and population. That is the way to institute the comparison; and it is the only true way. When I hear honourable gentlemen indulging in sneers at the press I invariably arrive at one conclusion; and I will not tell you what that conclusion is. It will not be necessary for me to again allude to the improper use made of what I said about the horny-handed class, especially as the Hon. Mr. Walkem fully vindicated me. One more point and I have done with the honourable the Chief Commissioner. That gentleman repeated the now stereotyped argument that the Dominion Government, being based on liberal institutions, would not withhold Responsible Government if desired by the people of British Columbia. That argument has been so often met that I was surprised to hear it repeated by that honourable gentleman. Need I say, for the twentieth time, that it is not the prerogative of the Canadian Government to give, unless asked by our local Government, and that our local Government will, from its organic nature, be averse to ask anything of the kind? Surely I am entitled to regard the constant iteration of those exploded arguments as evidence of the weakness of the Government cause. Passing to the speech of the Honourable Mr. Walkem, my task is an easy one; for although that honourable gentleman spoke with his accustomed eloquence and agreeableness of word and manner, all must have felt that his effort had about it an air of special pleading in a bad cause. The principal objection that gentleman brought against the position I took on Friday was, that Responsible Government is not a principle, but a form. Now, I think it may be regarded as either or both, and I am not disposed to quarrel about mere