

spinsters of Canada? At what election question was that made an issue? What opportunity have the members of this House had to consult their constituents on that question? And, again, with regard to the Indian suffrage. Have the views of the people of this country been taken upon that question? Has any hon. gentleman in any election told the people of this country that if he was returned to Parliament he would vote to enfranchise the Indians on their reserves—not to enfranchise them under the Indian Act, not to make them free men, to give them control of their own affairs, but that they might vote at elections, and mark their ballots under the supervision of the deputy returning officers. Why, Sir, we know that more than 90 per cent. of those Indians cannot read or write; they cannot mark their own ballots. We know that the hon. gentleman has charge of these men; we know the class of men they are—I have had personal experience in this matter, we know the kind of men [that will be appointed deputy returning officers on the Indian reserves; we know that they will take care how the Indian ballots shall be marked; we know precisely as well what will be done under the provisions of this Bill, as we shall know after the next general election. Sir, I admit that a Government has a right to deal with questions that cannot be foreseen, and that are forced upon its attention. Especially is this true of independent states in their relations with other states; and the Government must act as far as it can upon its own individual judgment, to be sustained by the independent opinion of Parliament itself. But there are various ways in which the opinions of the country are expressed, and which give to the Government, not that satisfactory aid and guidance which it can receive at a general election, but an imperfect aid—by means of the press, by public meetings, and by other means known under our constitution. But in England, when there has been a change in the constitution itself, when the institutions of the country have been altered, when the franchise has been extended or the representation has been changed, a general election has always first been held, and a majority has been returned to Parliament to support the policy that has before been enunciated. This was the case with the Reform Bill of 1832. On two occasions the views of the country were obtained before the question was dealt with; and when Parliament was dissolved the last time it was expressly stated by the King that he was proroguing Parliament with the view to its dissolution, for the purpose of ascertaining whether those who supported the Government were doing so in accordance with the wishes of the country. Now, Sir, that is a wholly different thing from acting contrary to our commission. We are here for the purpose of carrying on the Government under the constitution as it is, not for the purpose of changing the constitution or making it different from what it is; that is no part of our ordinary parliamentary duties. Let us not confound two wholly distinct and independent things. Under the English system of parliamentary government the alteration of the constitution is brought about by the same body which is entrusted with law-making power; but the alteration of the constitution is not made in the way that ordinary legislation is carried on. Ordinary legislation the Government may deal with from time to time as they may think proper; if the country does not approve, the country can change; but when you attack the constitution itself, when you undertake to alter the system of government under which we live, you can never go back to the same people again. You give no opportunity to those who entrusted you with authority of saying whether you are deserving of having continued to you the confidence they once reposed in you. I say, then, that a change in the constitution is made on a different plan and on different principles. It is made under popular sanction after the nation has been consulted, and after

its approval has been obtained. Sir, we know what is thought of Captain Kidd. He was entrusted with the king's commission, he was authorised under the commission to give protection to the commerce of the nation; but, instead of acting according to his commission he became a pirate, and by the violation of his commission he made war on that commerce that it was his duty under his commission to protect. What is the hon. gentleman doing? Has he been authorised by the people of this country to make changes in the constitution? Not at all. He has been commissioned to legislate under the constitution as it is; and in violation of that trust, he is calling on his supporters to change the constitution itself, and to place the power in this country in other hands than those to which it is committed at this moment. That is what the hon. gentleman proposes. It is making war upon our rights; it is making war upon those rights which it is the bounden duty of Parliament to guard; and we are bound, in our duty to our constituents and to this country, to resist by all constitutional means, this attempt at usurpation—this revolutionary act—this proposal to change our constitution and to make it something different from what it is. Sir, let me read, for the benefit of the hon. member for King's, an extract from an essay by Lord Jeffrey on the subject of party government:

"One party, that of the rulers or the court, is necessarily formed and disciplined from the permanence of its chief, and the uniformity of the interests it has to maintain;—the party in opposition, therefore, must be marshalled in the same way. When bad men combine, good men must unite—and it would not be less hopeless for a crowd of worthy citizens to take the field without leaders or discipline, against a regular army, than for individual patriots to think of opposing the influence of the Sovereign by their separate and uncombined exertions. As to the lengths they should be permitted to go in support of the common cause, or the extent of which each ought to submit his private opinion to the general sense of his associates, it does not appear to us—though casuists may varnish over dishonor, and purists startle at shadows—either that any man of upright feelings can be often at a loss for a rule of conduct, or that, in point of fact, there has ever been any blameable excess in the maxims upon which the great parties of this country have been generally conducted.

"The leading principle is, that the man should satisfy himself that the party to which he attaches himself means well to the country, and that more substantial good will accrue to the nation from its coming into power, than from the success of any other body of men whose success is at all within the limits of probability. Upon that principle, therefore, he will support that party in all things which he approves—in all things that are indifferent—and even in some things which he partly disapproves, provided they neither touch the honor and vital interests of the country, nor imply any breach of the ordinary rule of morality. Upon the same principle, he will attack not only all that he individually disapproves in the conduct of his adversary, but all that might appear indifferent and tolerable enough to a neutral spectator. If it afford an opportunity to weaken this adversary in the public opinion, and to increase the chance of bringing that party into power from which alone he sincerely believes that any sure or systematic good is to be expected. Farther than this we do not believe that the leaders or respectable followers of any considerable party intentionally allow themselves to go. Their zeal indeed, and the passions engendered in the course of the conflict, may sometimes hurry them into measures for which an impartial spectator cannot find this apology—but to their own conscience and honor we are persuaded that they generally stand acquitted—and, on the score of duty or morality, that is all that can be required of human beings. For the baser retainers of the party, indeed—those marauders who follow in the rear of every army, not for battle but for booty—who concern themselves in no way about the justice of the quarrel or the fairness of the field—who plunder the dead, and butcher the wounded, and desert the unprosperous, and betray the daring—for those wretches who truly belong to no party, and are a disgrace and drawback upon all, we shall assuredly make no apology or propose any measure of toleration."

Now, I think, with slight modifications, owing to the chance of circumstances in the nation, those views are still adapted to the parties in the United Kingdom, and I wish that his general description of party were equally applicable here; but if we are to be governed by the doctrines laid down by the member for King's, N.B. (Mr. Foster), that it is the bounden duty of the majority of the House to register the views of the Administration, no matter what those views may be, no matter whether the country has been consulted or not, it seems to me that hon. gentlemen opposite are fighting for booty rather than principle, and are seeking to promote the general well being of individuals rather