

justice will command our respect, though we should differ from his conclusions in some instances. The Council then, that we suppose, is an independent body, able to set itself either against the Executive or against the people, as occasion may require. The resistance which such a body would oppose to the popular will need excite no alarm. Their interests are identified with those of the people. From them they spring, and to them their families must return, unless they can win and wear their fathers' honours. In point of fact, the interests of such a body are against the Executive, and with the people; and if it were not that there is a natural tendency in wealth to make its possessors lean to and on their own class, we should say that the Council is more likely to take part with the people against the Executive than the reverse. The constitutional check on the popular will is therefore as limited as possible.

The next point on which we are called to remark is this,—that the administration of the Government shall be in general agreement with the interests of the people.

Some persons may, perhaps, suppose that we should have said, *always* in agreement with the people's interests. But as we do not expect a perfect government in this world, knowing rather, that every Executive, with the most sincere desire of doing right, will sometimes err, and do wrong, we have put the sentence as it stands,—in general agreement with the interests of the people.

We intimated at the outset, that the improved system of Government on which Canada has entered is to be found rather in an improved administration than in any organic changes of the Constitution. Of organic change there has been none, the alterations being merely in matters that affect no vital principle. The improved system is an improved administration, which will render the Government subservient to the interests of the people.

The question then, now is, how are the interests of the people to be ascertained? and how is the Executive to be kept in harmony with them? Those interests are to be ascertained, partly through an honest desire in the Executive to learn and promote them, (we may certainly assume so much,) but chiefly through the people's representatives. The Executive is to be kept in harmony with them, partly by

the action of the public mind, as through the press, public meetings, private representations, &c., but also chiefly through the action of the representatives on the Executive. The mode of that action is well known, as by vote, petition, address, remonstrance, stopping the supplies, refusing to proceed to business. By some of these acts the representatives can embarrass the Executive, and render it incapable of conducting the public business. But what concerns us here is, that action of the representatives on the Executive, by which, through a vote of want of confidence, they can change its character and action, by producing a change of ministry: in other words, we are conducted to the question of "responsible government."

As this subject has caused some discussion in Canada, and has been noticed by *His Excellency the Governor General*, and is formally treated on by Lord John Russell in his despatch of October 11, 1839, it is proper that we should endeavour to shew precisely how the question stands, and whether the Government has or has not adopted the principle of "responsible government."

This principle, as it was demanded by the Reformers, included two parts: first, that the British authorities, Ministerial and Parliamentary, should not interfere in our local affairs: and secondly, that these local affairs should be managed by a provincial ministry, chosen from among the party who had a majority in the Assembly, and changed as the majority might change, as is done in Great Britain.

Now, as to the first part of this demand, it has not been granted, nor will it ever be.* Her Majesty's ministers are responsible for all that is done in Her name in the Colonies, as well as at home; and they cannot divest themselves of this responsibility if they would. When a man takes office, he takes it with all its duties and responsibilities, of which the good government of the Colonies is one of the most important.—A man cannot be answerable for what he cannot direct: without control there is no responsibility. Therefore ministers must refuse their assent to this demand. And besides their official responsibility, their duty to the Crown and the nation

* It is proper to remark here, that this demand was not confined to the reform party, the tones, in the address on the disallowance of the Bank Act, having gone quite as far in denouncing Imperial interference in our local affairs as the reformers ever did.