Guelph Evening Mercury

TUESDAY EVENING, JAN. 14, 1878 Vote By Ballot.

Mr. Charles Clarke, the talented member for Centre Wellington in the Legislative Assembly, is gradu-ally gaining for himself an influential and prominent position in the judgment and advanced views on all public questions are beginning to be known and appreciated by the Gov ernment and his fellow members Last session he put on the notice paper several important inquiries, the answers to which conveyed much valuable information of a practica character, and tending to shape fu ture legislation. No sooner was this session opened, than among other notices he gives one for the intro duction of a bill providing for taking votes by ballot at elections of mem ers for the Legislative Assembly

detection of a oni providing for taking votes by ballot at elections of mem-bers for the Legislative Assembly. Not having yet seen the bill we can-not speak as to its provisions, but we have no doubt that Mr. Clarke has carefully considered every clause of it, and that it has been so framed that the Government and the House will accept and adopt it. The principle of vote by ballot being conceded, the mode in which it will be carried into effect is no dif-ficult task, but simply - a matter of detail. A few years ago had any one even hazarded the conjecture that vote by ballot would become a part of the constitution of Great Britain, he would have been put down as a wild dreamer and a foolish Utopian. But we are living in an age when le-gislation partakes of the same spirit and progress which mark every other department of human industry and though. The abuses which have grown up in connection with the exercise of the franchise have long called loudly for reform, and it is with a view of correcting these abuses, if not entirely extirpating them that vote y ballot is now be-ing substituted. It is needless for us to go over in detail these many abuses. They were long felt in Britain, where often the independ-ent expression of opinion at the polls was rendered impossible by every kind of corruption and intimidation. In this country, where the electors are more free and more indepen-dent—where class rule and the power and infinence of an overshadowing aristocracy are not felt—such cor-ruption, and intimidation has not been carried to the same exert. But that both have been practised—often in the most wanton and open man-ner—who will dare to deny that is at all conversant with parliamentary elections. Especially was this the case during the elections for the Dominion Parliament last summer, until it was no longer sought to hidf the scandal in the dark, but whis boldly and brazenly flaunted in open denough in their way, and we experi-

the scandal in the dark, but was boldly and brazenly flaunted in open day. Stringent election laws are good enough in their way, and we experi-enced the beneficial effects of these bounds of the beneficial effects of the Dominion. But the ballot, if pro-perlyexercised and carefully guarded, will constitute the most powerful means of securing for us purity of election, a free and untrammelled franchise, where the poor man as well as the encoder of the servant as well as the employer—the servant as the rich man—the dependant as well as the employer—the servant as be framed which cannot in some way be violated by the unseru-pulous and corrupt. But that it is as great step in advance few will affoct to disbelieve or doubt. We trust that Mr. Clarke's bill will be such as may meet the approval of the Gov-ernment and the House, and that we shall at the end of the session have the pleasure of recording it among the measures which will have become the law of the Province.



