

kinds such as those of Separate Schools, text-books, expenditure on Parliament Buildings, and liquor licences, are thrown in a confused heap before the people, and in each constituency are further complicated with local and personal influences, so that it is seldom possible to obtain a distinct verdict on any issue. This is a very weak point in our parliamentary institutions. Long ago we called attention to the Swiss system of the *Referendum*, under which legislative questions, especially those relating to changes of the Constitution are submitted separately and directly to the popular vote, so that a clear verdict is obtained. The system seems to work well in Switzerland, and though, in appearance ultra-democratic, to be in its practical tendency conservative. Individual legislators can be corrupted, or, as they are apt to be in the case of Woman's Suffrage, cajoled, but the people at large cannot. Something of the kind is already practised in the United States where amendments in State Constitutions are submitted to the popular vote. It is in effect a transfer of the veto from the monarch who has lost the power of exercising it to the sovereign people in whom the supreme power now resides. Such a body as the Legislature of Ontario, with its single chamber, ought not to be permitted to alter the Constitution at its pleasure without popular assent.

Another Swiss institution to which we formerly called attention is the Standing Council of State elected by the Legislative Assembly for the term of its own existence, irrespective of any changes in the legislative balance of the Assembly. This separates the Executive from the Legislative, gives the country a stable executive independent of the fluctuations of party, and enables it to make use of administrative ability without regard to irrelevant differences of legislative opinion. It seems in fact that the members of the minority are not infrequently elected to the Council on the ground of their executive capacity. If the system prevailed here Mr. Mowat and Mr. Meredith might both give us the benefit of their administrative capacities whatever their opinion might be upon Equal