

motives which move the hon. gentleman, would care to go. I think that the hon. gentleman has made very considerable progress in carrying out his views, which he has pressed with very praiseworthy ability and perseverance, in getting his Bill so far advanced, as to have come from the Special Committee; and the hon. gentleman, it seems to me, is casting only a very strong suspicion on, and weakens the chance of obtaining the third reading of his Bill by pressing this resolution.

Mr. BLAKE. Mr. Speaker: We have heard from the hon. gentleman a good deal of verbal criticism with reference to this clause, which is, perhaps, hardly in place. The hon. gentleman announces his opinion on general grounds against this clause at an early stage of the Bill; and he declared, on the first reading of the Bill, I think, or on the second, that this clause must go out, because it is opposed to the liberty of the subject, that is to say the liberty of the contracting subject. He struck a Committee, and this Committee extraordinary to say, followed out his views; and the clause has gone out. We are not here, Sir, to engage in the discussion of "whatsoever," and "whomsoever," and other objections of equal force and weight as to the principle of the clause, which the hon. gentleman has presented to the House. We are now engaged merely in considering the principle of the clause; and when the Bill goes back to the Committee, my hon. friend can arrange the verbal objections to which the hon. gentleman has resorted; and if there are any other defects, as suggested, if the clause goes in some particulars too far, it is quite open to the House to correct any minor defect. We are considering in this vote, the general principle of the clause merely, whether it shall go back to the Committee or not; and it will be in the power of the Committee to deal with any objections, and the precise mode of doing so can be disposed of by the Committee. Now, the hon. gentleman's objection on principle, is that my hon. friend is not logical, and that the Bill interferes with the liberty of the subject. The hon. gentleman is fortunate in a long political experience, such as he has had, for he declares that he has never seen contractors offering any money. Well, I suppose not. Perhaps he did not look. But, I suppose he has heard of it; I suppose he knows of it; and I suppose he cannot but be aware that it has been done; and he cannot but be aware that it has been done with that view—a patriotic view in the interests of the country—with the expectation of being reimbursed, and reimbursed tenfold. It is the relation which the contractor held with regard to the Government of the country, that renders it necessary that restrictions should be placed upon him. That such restrictions should be placed upon him is established by laws now on the Statute-book, because those laws on the Statute-book forbid him to become a Member of Parliament, and voids his seat, if after becoming a Member of Parliament, he enters into these relations with the Government? Why is that? Because it is known that he cannot be indifferent under these circumstances—because it is believed that he will not be independent under these circumstances—because it is believed that his relation to the Government will be one of subserviency on his part, and the relation of the Government to him will be one of paying a price for his support on their part. All these considerations have resulted in our passing, time and again, laws to preclude contractors from being Members of Parliament, and now we are face to face with another proposition in the same direction and based upon the same recognition of the weakness of humanity. The hon. gentleman talks about the rights of the subject, but we have now to consider their frailties—I say we are face to face with another proposition. If a contractor pays a sum of money towards election expenses, he does it, as a rule, because he expects to be reimbursed by an abundant consideration on the part

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of the Government which he helps in the contest, and, therefore, there is not merely an improper inducement on his part, but there is also this circumstance—that the public is sure to suffer. It is certain that for every dollar he pays he expects to receive a great deal; that for what bread he casts on the water he expects to get back a great deal more after many days; that what money he gives he expects to receive again with usury. These things are certain; they are obvious; they are palpable; and the hon. gentleman proposes that we should agree to the principle of a step which shall remove all those evils, and shall render it contrary to the law that a man standing in any such relations as those to a Government shall subscribe towards an election fund. The hon. gentleman suggests that if the contractor has performed his contract he may have a right to stand. It is a question for discussion in Committee whether that particular portion of the clause should remain or not, and it is immaterial to consider in this debate whether that particular portion of the clause is sound, because we are not restricted to the precise words of the clause as it stands. The hon. gentleman says that this clause would make the man a criminal—that he must actually go to gaol. Only the other day certain men were made criminals if they used the words "banking institutions" on their signs without adding to these words "not incorporated." There was not a great degree of levity manifested as to the right of the subject on that occasion, when the disgrace of making men misdemeanant was imposed for such an offence; but I should like to know whether more harm is done to the body politic by the mischief sought to be remedied by the present Bill than by the acts which were made misdemeanors the other day by the Banking Bill of the hon. Finance Minister. The question is, whether an evil which exists shall be remedied, or whether it shall remain; that is the question of principle involved in the amendment, and I propose to divide with the mover of the amendment on this occasion.

Mr. WHITE (Cardwell). I think those who are opposed to the amendment, will be gratified to learn that it finds no defender in the hon. member for West Durham. This Bill was introduced some time ago; this particular clause was in the Bill as introduced; but the Committee to which the Bill was referred, after full consideration, has reported it to the House without that clause. Some days have elapsed; and, it seems to me, it would only have been respectful to the House to have presented, for our acceptance, an amendment which would at any rate meet with some degree of support from the hon. leader of the Opposition. We find that this particular amendment as it stands to-day, and as it is proposed by the amendment to be replaced in the Bill, is so drawn, and contains such provisions that the hon. leader of the Opposition is not prepared to defend it. On the contrary, he says when it goes to the Committee, all its objectionable features may be removed. It seems to me, with reference to this question of contractors, that there are contractors and contractors. There are persons who are in expectation of getting contracts. What will you do with them? We have heard of cases—perhaps they are rare—of this kind: a prominent man in a particular constituency, belongs to one particular party, but when an election takes place, by some strange influence he is found supporting the candidate on the other side. We find a little while afterwards that a letter is written by that particular candidate to the Premier of the day, whom he is supporting—a letter cautiously and properly written—simply indicating that "my friend Moore" is desirous of getting a contract; that he has told him that the Minister will not for a single moment do anything but what is perfectly right. We find that the Minister does not do anything but what is perfectly right; but in some extraordinary way we find that another gentleman, a contractor, though he is strongly recom-