

them to continue the direction of the Government of the country, and will give them in Parliament a decided majority of active partisans.

The prospect of obtaining a stronger majority cannot justify a dissolution.

Dissolutions which come to nothing are, in general, prejudicial to the authority of the Crown. Succeeding one another rapidly, they diminish the efficacy of a powerful instrument given to the Crown for its defence.

The dissolution by the whigs in 1831 was, in any opinion, an unjustifiable act. The dissolution at the present moment would be equally unjustifiable, if the result would likely be the same.

Why should we appeal to the country? Certainly not for the mere personal interest we might have to know if we were right in submitting the corn laws. Such an appeal must be determined by some principle. (Idem page 286.)

Hearn says :

Again, where no political question is at issue but the object is merely the advantage of a particular party, there is no proper case for a dissolution. (Hearn, Government of England, p. 156.)

The last of these events, indeed, is a conspicuous example of the violation of those principles which usually regulate the exercise of this prerogative. Its immediate cause was a vote of the House of Commons adverse to the Reform Bill which Lord Derby's ministry had introduced. But there was nothing in the state of the country, at that time, to render the rejected measure essential to the proper administration of public affairs. There was no such agitation as that which, in 1832, had threatened civil war. Both before this Bill and after it, other Reform Bills were laid aside without any material disturbance of the public tranquillity. The parliament too, was only in its second year, and nothing since its election had occurred to excite a suspicion that the existing House of Commons did not fairly represent the sense of the nation. The ministers declared that they expected to have about three hundred supporters in the new Parliament. They could not therefore have felt a strong moral conviction that they would have a majority sufficient to enable them to carry on the government. At the time of the dissolution the state of public affairs was very alarming.

The dissolution, then, must be regarded as a mere party measure and, as such, comes within the express condemnation of Sir Robert Peel. (Hearn, p. 159.)

The following is Gladstone's opinion :

The right hon. Gentleman speaks as if this resort to a dissolution and advice of penal dissolution were an every day practice. What are the instances of such a resort? the case of 1841 is a doubtful precedent.....

.....Very well, if the right honorable gentleman does not take that for granted he only enables me the more broadly to question his proposition, and to ask him to show me from the history of this country, and from the great constitutional authorities, other than members of the Government of Lord Derby, where the doctrine is laid down that, irrespective of other consideration, an administration, as an existing administration, is entitled to make an appeal to the country a condition previous to its resignation of office. (Gladstone, Hansard, vol. 191 p. 1711.)