

in its provisions. The owners or occupants of houses, farmers and their sons, mechanics, clerks and others who receive a certain income, can in Ontario exercise the franchise; and indeed in Prince Edward Island the performance of statute labour, or the payment of a few shillings in lieu thereof, entitles a man to vote and in effect establishes universal suffrage. Until recently the members of the House of Commons were elected by the same constituency which returns representatives to the Assemblies, but during the last session of Parliament it was thought advisable by the government to arrange uniform franchise for the Dominion. This measure met with a great deal of opposition at the time, ostensibly on the ground that it was unnecessary to interfere with the previous practice which had worked quite satisfactorily on the whole; but without going into the political question as to the necessity for this change of policy, there is no doubt that the new franchise is extremely wide, and that every man of intelligence and respectability who is able to make an honest livelihood in any vocation of life will now be able to exercise the privilege of voting for the most influential legislative body of Canada. Whilst the people annually vote for municipal officers, they choose representatives to the Assemblies every four years and to the Dominion Parliament every five years. Although the period of five years is fixed for the latter body, the exigencies of party government give the people an opportunity of choosing new representatives every four years, if not less, on an average. In this way they are able to criticize the acts of their representatives at sufficiently short intervals of time, and to exercise a large control over the management of public affairs. In every country enjoying a system of representative government it is absolutely essential there should be abundant room for the expression of public opinion without at the same time keeping the public mind in a state of turmoil and agitation by a frequency of elections. The Canadians believe that their system is in this respect an improvement on that of the United States where the frequent occurrence of elections — for country and state officers, for representatives to Congress and the State legislatures, and for the Presidency — seems calculated to disturb business and give an opportunity to demagogues and partisans which may prove, sooner or later, injurious to the public interests. In one respect, however, the people of Canada might well follow the example of their neighbours, and that is with regard to the meetings of their provincial legislative assemblies. The practice of holding biennial sessions of the Legislatures is gaining ground throughout the United States, and is very materially lessening