

have proved very injurious to the colony for a long while, and must have been fatal to the pursuit of those much-desired objects which we have now so fair a prospect of attaining. But at this moment, Sir, another fear has come upon me. I am now somewhat afraid of something else—something of a very different character and tendency. I look with some apprehension to the possibility that we, betrayed into over-confidence by the greatness of our unexpected success, may be disposed to go too fast in the exercise of the powers which that success has bestowed upon us. Prosperity is harder to bear than adversity. I trust that we may not be led away by this great event to think ourselves immaculate; to believe that whatever we do must be right; to resemble the army or navy captain who receives at his club the astonishing information that Her Majesty's Government consider him to possess the high qualities which fit him to represent the Crown in one of Her Majesty's colonies, and who, after a night of sleepless enjoyment, looks at himself in the glass, and asks his image how it happened that his great capacity for governing remained so long undiscovered. Sir, I venture to pray of the House to recollect that, in present circumstances, the state of mind that will best become us is one of thoughtfulness and caution in all our proceedings. I will now proceed to notice the Ministerial arrangements which have resulted from our successful pursuit of Responsible Government, and will afterwards touch upon the policy of the new Ministers as that was developed to us by the able and interesting speech of my honourable friend the member for Lyttelton (Mr. FitzGerald). But, first, let me say that this appears a most fitting occasion for such remarks. We have been here nearly a month, and have hitherto discussed only the single topic of Responsible Government. None of us has had any opportunity of expressing his views as to legislation for the general advantage of the colony and the particular provinces.

(c.) At the rate of 100 words per minute. Takes 5 minutes.

We have not had before us any legislative policy that we could examine. Such a policy has now been framed for us by three of our body, or, rather, is submitted to us by them for our consideration. Our first duty is to examine it; and, indeed, my honourable friend (Mr. FitzGerald), at the close of his speech, expressly invited us to examine it in a spirit of friendly but searching criticism: an invitation which, I am sure the House thinks with me, came from him with peculiar grace and propriety. Considering the Ministerial arrangements in a general point of view, it is manifest to all of us that they are incomplete, not intended to be permanent, essentially provisional, and therefore designed to be improved as soon as possible. I am not finding fault with that: on the contrary, I well know that the provisional character of the new Government was inevitable. There was no possibility of forming what would deserve to be called a permanent Government. In former debates it was often brought to the notice of the House that the absence of two rival parties amongst us forbade the immediate formation of a complete and permanent Administration; but on these occasions I expressed the hope and belief that this circumstance had a tendency to facilitate a complete adoption of the principle of Responsible Government, though it would necessitate a merely provisional arrangement. So it has turned out; and the latter fact must be fully acknowledged, as, indeed, it is by my honourable friends themselves. As to the manner in which we have obtained in this House responsible members of the Executive Council, I cannot refrain from expressing my own satisfaction with the compromise, whereby the views of the great majority have been reconciled with those of the minority of two. As I understood the honourable member for the Northern Division (Mr. Forsaith) and the honourable member for the City of Auckland (Mr. O'Brien), they had but one objection to the immediate establishment of Ministerial responsibility—namely, that it could not be done legally without permission from the Imperial authorities; that the law stood in our way; that without a reference Home there would be an infraction of constitutional law. That objection, that difficulty, I am pleased to find has been evaded or obviated through the willingness of the old members of the Executive to retire whenever they may be called upon to do so—a compromise of conflicting legal opinions, under which neither party has to give way, and of which the happy effect is that this House, instead of being divided with regard to giving immediate effect to the new principle of government, is now, I apprehend, unanimous upon that point. And here, Sir, let me say that I owe an acknowledgment, in the form of amends, to the honourable and learned gentleman who has long held the office of Attorney-General in this part of the colony.

*Senior.*

(d.) At the rate of 80 words per minute. Takes 10 minutes.

Sir, you will no doubt have remarked that, in the Queen's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament, Her Majesty was pleased to refer to her colonial and Indian possessions in the following terms: "I have observed with much satisfaction the interest which, in an increasing degree, is evinced by the people of this country in the welfare of their colonial and Indian fellow-subjects; and I am led to the conviction that there is on all sides a growing desire to draw closer in every practicable way the bonds which unite the various portions of the Empire. I have authorised communications to be entered into with the principal colonial Governments with a view to the fuller consideration of matters of common interest."

The communications thus promised with the colonies have engaged the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government, and they have come to the conclusion that the Queen should be advised to summon a Conference, to meet in London in the early part of next year, at which representatives of the principal colonial Governments will be invited to attend for the discussion of those questions which appear more particularly to demand attention at the present time. I request you to inform your Ministers of this proposal, which, I am confident, will be very satisfactory to them, and to express the hope which I entertain of their cordial co-operation.

In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government the question which is at once urgent and capable of useful consideration at the present time is that of organization for military defence. The patriotic action of the colonies in offering contingents of troops to take part in the Egyptian campaign made a deep and lasting impression on the public mind, and was the first practical result of