

R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE of the House of Representatives, appointed May 9, 1856, to enquire into and report as to the changes which it may be desirable to make in the Constitution Act, report as follows :—

Your Committee has considered the subjects referred to it, including the Bills for the Prevention of Bribery, and the Correspondence between Mr. Carlton and the Government relative to certain matters connected with elections at the Bay of Islands and elsewhere, in the Province of Auckland.

1. Your Committee is of opinion that the Regulations relating to the Electoral Roll and the conduct of Elections, contained in Sir George Grey's Proclamation of 5th March, 1853, require alteration in several particulars, among which the following appear of pressing importance :—

I.—THE PROVISIONS FOR THE MAKING UP OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL.

Your Committee has reason to believe that the existing Roll is far from complete or accurate; that many names are upon it which ought not to be, and that others have been omitted which ought to be upon it; and that no sufficient means of correcting it exist in conformity with the present Regulations.

They submit as remedies—1. That personal service of objections to voters on the Roll be not required, but that in lieu thereof a written objection, served at the usual or last usual place of abode of the party objected against, and published in the *Government Gazette* two months before the Roll is made up, be substituted. 2. That any claimant for enrolment may support his claim either in person or by deputy, and that no evidence of the appointment of such deputy be required. 3. That the officers appointed by Government to take the Census should be supplied with claiming papers; and wherever a party is not on the Roll, whose qualification as a voter is apparent on taking such Census, the officer should send in a claim to be enrolled on behalf of such person. 4. That any person may send in a claim on his own account. 5. That any person who may object to his name being on the Roll should have power, by application in writing, to require his name to be taken off the Roll. 6. That the existing Roll ought to be abolished so soon as a new one shall have been constructed in manner above suggested; and that the Government ought to take immediate steps towards creating such new Roll, for which purpose it may be necessary to pass a short Act, authorizing the Census to be taken during the now ensuing year.

II.—AS REGARDS THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS.

That it is desirable, if possible, to abolish the system of voting by written ticket, and to require *viva voce* voting instead. But if the present system be adhered to, greater precautions should be adopted against personation, the tendering of papers without the presence of the voter, during the absence of the two electors whose objection is requisite, and other frauds which appear to have been practised. That the Returning Officer should not be allowed to reject any vote except on the ground either that the voter is not on the Roll, or that he cannot satisfactorily answer the questions required by the existing regulations.

That there should only be one place for nomination of a Superintendent within the same Province.

1 That any candidate, or any two electors on his behalf, should, at any nomination, have power to demand a poll.

2. That no Resident Magistrate should be Returning Officer *virtute officii*, but that such officers should be specially appointed.

3. That petitions against returns should be presented within 21 days from official declaration of the poll, and not from the day of election, as at present.