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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENT.

"HIBERNICUS."—Your letter received too late; will appear next issue.

BIRTH.

PURTON—On the 19th inst, at St. Bathans, the wife of Mr. George Purton, of a son.

New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1875.

THE ABOLITION BILL.

THIS Bill has been read a second time by a considerable majority, after a very prolonged debate. The large majority in its favor, after the many able speeches made in opposition to it, is truly astonishing. This Bill abolishes local self-government, and establishes a system of centralism, which amounts to despotism. There are some either so silly or so stupid as to imagine that despotism and representative institutions cannot co-exist. But a greater delusion there cannot be. A majority is as capable of tyranny as an individual or an oligarchy. The history of the past, as well as contemporary history, affords innumerable proofs of this. But it is unnecessary to go beyond the precincts of our own House of Representatives for an instance in point. What is the fact? Is it not true, that a tyrant majority there, at present, has determined to force the Abolition Bill through Parliament in defiance of the reasonable request of the minority of members and of tens of thousands throughout the country, that the measure should be submitted to the constituencies; and in contempt of the serious doubts that exist as to the power of the Legislature to pass it? Why, the veriest despot would not dare to enact a law under such circumstances. But majorities in Parliament care for nothing but their majority, which is their *suprema lex*.

That this is strikingly, illustrated in the present instance is patent to every reader of Hansard. On laying down this book, which contains an authorised report of the speeches delivered in Parliament, we could not help exclaiming, "The title of the Bill is a misnomer, it should have been intitled 'The Provinces Spoliation Bill.'" It despoils the people of control over their own affairs, and transfers it to men ignorant of them, and as Mr. REID proved to demonstration, it plunders Otago to an enormous extent. We looked in vain through the arguments of its supporters for grounds to justify its introduction, whilst on the other hand, the speeches of its opponents, such for example as Messrs. REID, ROLLESTON, REEVES, MACANDREW, and STOUR abounded in strong arguments against it. These were the speeches of practical men and able administrators; whilst that of Sir GEORGE GREY was the speech of a high-minded, chivalrous, able and experienced statesman.

The newspapers told us that Mr. STAFFORD delivered an eloquent and able oration in support of the Bill; and his previous advocacy of such a measure, united with his undoubted ability and great experience as a Colonial Minister, led us to expect that such would be the character of his speech. When we received a copy of 'Hansard' we eagerly read his speech, but we are forced to confess that we experienced a great disappointment. We were unable to find in it a single reason why this Bill should become law. In our mind, amongst all the bad speeches of Government supporters, Mr. STAFFORD'S was decidedly one of the worst, in an argumentative point of view. It cannot be denied that it was eloquent, and that it gives evidence of considerable reading and a commendable knowledge of the history of Greece, but as an argument for depriving the people of Otago, for example, of their institutions, it is a lamentable failure. In our judgment it contains nothing

whatever to the point.

It was the duty of Government and its supporters to establish their position by showing that the failure of some of the Provincial Governments arose from their inherent defects, and not from the action of the central Government itself, and by proving that their proposed substitute was not only a remedy but the proper remedy. Provincialism is in possession, and in argument, as in law, possession is nine points. But so far from succeeding in doing this, not one on the Government benches was able to clear the Central Government of the guilt of rendering certain Provincial Governments inefficient. And as to the Abolition Bill itself, it proposed to effect nothing but destruction. The Government seems to have no policy as to the future, they do not know what is to take the place of Provincial Institutions. The task of doing this is to be relegated to a new Parliament. All they seem capable of effecting at present, is to reduce the institutions of the provinces to a heap of ruins; others may, if they can, combine these and build them into a beautiful and harmonious political machine. This is the strangest mode of proceeding imaginable. The institutions of the country are to be pulled to pieces, and no one knows what is to take their place! It is the policy of children whose greatest delight is to smash their toys through wantonness or idle curiosity.

He must be a comical statesman indeed, who can delude himself so far as to imagine that the people of Otago and Auckland will long endure Government centralised in Wellington. So long as these provinces had local government and Provincial Councils, the Central Government at Wellington might possibly have been tolerated; though it is very doubtful if their patience would not have been very soon wearied; but a very few years of Centralism will, most probably, cause such an agitation either for separation or the removal of the seat of Government, as New Zealand has not yet experienced. These provinces will not, and cannot, consistently with their own interests, long submit to the state of things that the Abolition Bill will bring about. This Bill has not been wisely drawn, nor has it been well considered, and it is most unwise to proceed further with it. Let these gentlemen who are so desperately enamoured of Centralism, which experience proves has always led to despotism, mature a plan and then consult the constituencies. But if they press the present measure, and pass it into law, the consequence will be, that at the general elections the cry will be the repeal of this obnoxious measure.

PROVINCIALISM VERSUS ABOLITION.

If ever an appeal to the people was answered in a most unmistakable manner, it was at the meeting held on Tuesday evening last, to consider the action of the Government in its proposed constitutional changes. The meeting was advertised to be held at the Athenaeum, but long before the time appointed, the number assembled was so great, that it was wisely determined the proceedings should take place in the Drill Shed. Although the requisition to his Worship had been signed by gentlemen known to have opinions adverse to the Government, there was a large proportion of those holding different views, not only amongst the meeting, but also on the platform. Indeed to such an extent did they muster, and so quickly did abolitionist follow abolitionist, that it seemed more than probable that the time and opportunity to be allowed to those by whom the meeting was called would have been but small. Much valuable time was wasted by the persistent conduct of a couple of well-known open-air spouters who, in defiance of the Chairman continued to hold forth to the meeting amid a torrent of yells and hisses. Mr. Robert Gillies was the first speaker who rose to defend the question of Abolition, and in so doing he strove to influence the meeting by quoting a passage from the speech of Mr. Macandrew. The passage read by Mr. Gillies certainly bore out the assertion that the Superintendent of Otago considered the existence of Provincialism in the future undesirable, but although that gentleman did not state anything which was not uttered by the member for Port Chalmers, by his suppression of what qualified the particular portion quoted, he was guilty of manifest unfairness in placing false issues before the meeting. He then moved "That the thanks of this meeting be accorded the representatives of the city for their support of the Government on the question of Abolition."—Mr. Fish followed Mr. Gillies, but as he evidently was not equal to entertaining the meeting, through the effects of a cold, he wisely contented himself with seconding the motion.—Mr. Grant followed suit, and in a trenchant manner denounced the corruption of politicians and legislators, both Provincial and General. The other speakers on the same side were Mr. Thomas Birch, and Mr. R. H. Leary, both of whom spoke in a calm, temperate tone, and had they any arguments to produce, their words might have carried much weight. When Mr. Hooper attempted to address the meeting, although his had been one of the first names appended to the requisition asking the meeting to be convened, the "friends" of the Government, who occupied the front rows created such an unseemly tumult, that in deference to the request of the Chairman,