

weigh and foresee the effect which modifications in their Constitution may produce upon the future of their country. Under such circumstances, they are not very watchful of trifling political or social changes which may from time to time be introduced under the authority of the Colonial Department: yet the accumulated effect of these changes may gradually produce an entire alteration in their form of government, and, after the lapse of a few years, they may find themselves landed in political or social institutions to which they never would have submitted had they known it had been intended to impose them upon their country.

23. It was the objection entertained by many leading British statesmen to such dangerous powers being left in the hands of the Colonial Office that induced the British Parliament to attempt to secure to the people of New Zealand and other dependencies of the Crown the power of controlling their own affairs, and of shaping their own future, without the interference of the Colonial Department.

24. The people of New Zealand, mindful of this, will, therefore, probably struggle against all efforts that may be unlawfully or improperly made to meddle with their Constitution, and to give to the Secretary of State, or the Governor, or the two combined, powers which the law does not confer upon them, and the exercise of which, if once allowed, might be drawn into a precedent most disastrous for the future of this country.

25. They would be wise in following this course, for to allow the interference of either the Principal Secretary of State, or the Permanent Under Secretary, with the Legislature or Executive Government of this colony, would be to permit them to humiliate our statesmen, and to, perhaps, subject them to severe temptation.

26. The Secretary of State is an officer whose authority is highly respected. His name and office carry great weight. It is an unpopular thing in any colony for a Ministry to differ with the Secretary of State; for it is generally believed that such a proceeding might turn one who could be a powerful and useful friend to the country into its foe.

27. The Secretary of State has also in his hands the power of conferring honors and distinctions which many colonial statesmen and colonists often desire, perhaps too eagerly, to obtain, and colonial statesmen might, in some instances, be unwilling to assume an attitude of hostility to a department possessing the power of bestowing such great advantages and honors upon Her Majesty's colonial subjects. To refer, therefore, constitutional questions for the decisions or opinions of the Secretary of State, and then to communicate those decisions and opinions to the Cabinet, is to enter upon a course which is likely sooner or later to create parties in the Ministry of the day.

28. Again, if the Secretary of State, or, in fact, the Permanent Under Secretary, is constituted the arbiter on such questions as those that have been at issue between the Governor and the General Assembly, and the Governor and his Ministers—that is, if an exterior authority is called in to interfere in our internal constitutional differences—a course would be pursued which would not only be humiliating to ourselves, but would also be unfair to Great Britain, which has given to the people of New Zealand the power of settling all such questions on the spot by ordinary constitutional means: for the certain result of such a line of proceeding would inevitably be to create differences between Great Britain and this country.

29. Generally, it may be said that the people of New Zealand will always unhesitatingly leave to the Principal Secretary of State, or to the Permanent Under Secretary, the exercise of all those powers which the law vests in him, and will assist him in giving effect to them; whilst they will, at the same time, claim for themselves the right of exercising, without interference on the part of the Governor, the Secretary of State, or the Permanent Under Secretary, all those powers which the British Parliament has bestowed upon them.

30. Sir George Grey feels that there is another point to which he should allude. The constitutional practice of Responsible Government requires that the Ministers should originate questions to which effect is to be given, and that, having originated them, they should then submit them to the Governor, with their advice as to the course which His Excellency should pursue in regard to them. In the case at present under consideration, the Governor has first moved in the matter. Without consulting his Ministers, or even informing them what he was doing, he submitted certain constitutional questions, which had arisen between himself and the General Assembly, and himself and his Ministers, for the decisions or opinions of the Secretary of State. He received these and communicated them to Ministers for their information, and, without consulting them on the subject, issued to them his commands, that his applications for these decisions and opinions, and the decisions and opinions themselves, should be laid before the General Assembly. By this proceeding on his part, the Ministers are made, not the advisers of the Governor, but his servants, to execute orders regarding which their advice has never been sought.

31. The introduction and establishment of a system of this kind would enable the Principal Secretary of State, or Permanent Under Secretary, as well as the Governor himself, to make what would really be addresses to the General Assembly against the Ministers of the day—a proceeding which would be most humiliating to Ministers, and which would be likely to encourage the formation of hostile parties and of a strong opposition in the Assembly, and to fan into a flame the feelings of those members who might be most strongly opposed to the Government.

32. Up to this point, Sir George Grey has viewed this subject simply under its general aspect. He now wishes to speak as to what he regards his official duty to be. He cannot con-