

4. Your Committee has abstained from considering many matters of importance connected with the Constitution Act, on account of the proposal of the Government to endeavour to obtain power from Parliament to alter the Act.

5. Your Committee has agreed to the provisions of a Bill for the prevention of bribery, and to make provision for the decision of disputed returns, which they append for the consideration of your Honorable House. They would also suggest that a Bill should be laid before your House disqualifying persons who have been guilty of bribery or treating at any election from holding the office for which they have been returned, by such influence, till after one other election for the same shall have taken place. They have not inserted provisions to that effect in the appended Bill, because, as altering the qualification fixed by the Constitution Act, it would have been necessary to obtain the sanction of the Imperial Government, and so have delayed the operation of the Bill.

6. Your Committee also suggests the necessity for an Act enabling the Governor to appoint a Commission to adjudicate on disputed returns of Superintendents.

7. If possible, an Act should be passed during the present session to carry into effect the foregoing suggestions.

8. In reference to the correspondence with the General Government concerning the proceedings of Mr. Clendon, who acted as Returning Officer at the Bay of Islands during the late elections, and the return of voting papers rejected by Returning Officers in the Province of Auckland during the late elections, laid upon the table of the House, your Committee are of opinion that Mr. Clendon acted in excess of his powers; and that it was the duty of the General Government, when the matter was brought officially before them, to have taken cognizance of proceedings which are subversive of the first principles of representative institutions.

Your Committee are of opinion that Captain Haultain, in the Southern division of the Province of Auckland, also acted in excess of his powers.

Your Committee are informed, by the correspondence laid before them, that voting papers were also cancelled by the Sheriff of Auckland, who acted as principal Returning Officer. No return of those papers has been laid before them.

WILLIAM FOX, *Chairman.*

*Committee Room, House of Representatives,
July 29, 1856.*