

7  
Pickham

# The Waterford Chronicle



No. 2143.

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1834.

Price 6d.

## IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—THURSDAY, MAY 15.

REPEAL OF THE SEPTENNIAL ACT.

Mr. STRUTT presented a petition from Derby, for the repeal of the Septennial Act.

Mr. E. L. BULVER presented a petition with the same prayer from Coventry.

Mr. BRISCOE presented a similar petition from Perth.

Mr. TENNYSON then brought forward his motion upon this subject. He said he did not know what course the noble lord intended now to pursue, but he regretted that the repeal of the Septennial Act was not submitted to Parliament at the settlement of the great measure of reform. Ministers would thus have gained greater credit for the measure, and have added another wreath to the immortal crown of his present Majesty. It would have come with the more grace, recollecting that the Septennial Act was passed to secure more effectually the throne to the House of Brunswick. Without entering into the matter at length, he would remind the house that, at the revolution, the period of three years was considered the fit duration of a parliament.

Mr. STANLEY remarked that the period of three years was not fixed at the revolution, but afterwards.

Mr. TENNYSON admitted that the Triennial Act did not pass until 1694; but the Bill of Rights had asserted, that frequent Parliaments were necessary. It was a *recitata questio*, whether it was meant by those words to imply that frequent elections were necessary; but five or six years afterwards, the great men who lived at the time of the revolution conceived the Triennial Act, thus clearly explaining the terms of the Bill of Rights. From the time of Henry VIII. to the period of the revolution, there were forty-two parliaments, and out of this number there were twenty-six that existed for a less term than a year. From the time of Charles I. to the revolution there were twelve parliaments, and the average duration of these twelve parliaments was three years. Calculating the duration, excluding the long parliament, the average term would be found to be not more than nine months. It was surely wrong, then, to suppose that there had been long parliaments prior to the passing of the Triennial Bill. Three years appeared to him to be a reasonable period for the transaction of public business; and he thought he could show that this time was quite consistent with the general principles of our constitution. The old practice unquestionably was to assemble parliament with a view to the dispatch of business that would probably rise. The language of the ancient writs would, he thought, establish this fact. It would appear from them that parliament was always summoned with reference to certain matters forseen, at the period at which parliament was called together, as likely to require its attention, and to dispose of those matters. Some persons entertained an apprehension that the adoption of Triennial Parliaments might lead to mischievous results; but, in his opinion, in order to dissipate such fears it was not necessary to do more than refer to what had been the effects of them. Under the Triennial Act, there were nine parliaments. Now he would appeal to the whole of the legislation of the whole of that period, and confidently ask in what respect that afforded the slightest ground of alarm? The present bill was similar to that which he had recommended to the house on a former occasion. He would not disguise that if the bill went into committee, it was his intention to express his own opinion on the subject, by moving that the term of the future duration of parliaments should be three years; but as the present bill left the matter to that extent open, the noble lord opposite or any other gentleman would be at liberty at that stage of the bill, to propose any other term. He believed the people of England would be grateful for any modification of the existing law; but he must say, that if five years were proposed, he should feel it his duty to vote against such a motion. They might determine in favour of five years, but that would not determine the question. (Hear, hear, from Mr. Secretary Stanley.) He thanked the right hon. gentleman for that cheer; he perfectly understood its meaning. He advisedly repeated the words—"That it would not settle the question." (Loud cries of hear, hear.) Some gentlemen told him that it was unnecessary to shorten the duration of parliaments, since the house had been made more popular; the amendment of the representation, they would, perhaps, render the shortening of the duration of parliament needless. Now he begged the house to remember that the leaders of reform, among whom was Mr. Grey, uniformly said that these two changes—the amendment of the representation, and the shortening of the duration of Parliaments—ought to be accomplished, to place the liberties of the country on a sure foundation. This was the language used by the reformers of 1797, and were they, when in 1834 they proposed to shorten the Parliaments, to have this answer, "We think the question of reform is settled, because we have improved the representation of the people?" Such a course involved inconsistency. Before the reform bill was passed, the sense of the people was only partially expressed. Now that the reform bill had effected a great improvement in that respect, it was rather extraordinary to contend against the shortening of the duration of Parliaments, on the ground that the means of ascertaining the opinions and feelings of the country existed. If Parliaments were shortened, seats would become less the objects of contention by pecuniary means, and would more generally lead to local representation. The consequence would be, a considerable improvement in the social intercourse of the kingdom. One of the advantages of elections occurring oftener would be, that when, as it sometimes happened, the best man was excluded, an earlier opportunity would be afforded for his return. There was another point he would press on the consideration of the house, and that was the principle of representation, and got a reformed parliament, they might depend on it that they would experience greater changes at the end of seven years than they had before. (Hear, hear.) Under the old nominal system, one half of the house were almost certain of being again returned; but if the Parliament were suffered to exist for six or seven years, it would be found that there would be such great changes in the composition of the House, that very considerable inconveniences would be the result. If the parliaments were shorter, the same men would to a much greater extent be returned. They would thus secure a majority who would more efficiently discharge the public business than others could do who entered the house for the first time. The hon. gentleman then concluded with his motion.

Sir E. CODRINGTON said he rose to second the motion, not with a view to reduce the time of Parliaments to three years, but to five. He believed there were good grounds for the septennial bill at the time it was passed, but there was no necessity for its continuance, any more than there had been for a continuance of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. There were a great many who preferred Triennial Parliaments—some were the advocates of annual Parliaments; but he would propose five years, even were he of opinion that three years would be preferable; because if they made the period five years in the first instance, they could easily descend; whereas, if they made three years at once, and subsequently found that time too short, they never would be able to increase the period. The hon. and gallant gentleman in conclusion seconded the motion.

Colonel DAVIES said he would give his opposition to the motion of the hon. gentleman, because he thought it premature, inexpedient, detrimental to the dispatch of the business of the country, and subversive of the independence of Parliament. He was at a loss to understand why it should have been introduced at this time. Within the last two years, they had effected changes amounting almost to a revolution, and far exceeding the hopes of the most sanguine Reformers of the day. This house was now supposed to speak the feelings of the people, and every thing that was here said was wafted with the speed of lightning to the remotest corners of the kingdom. The Parliament was chosen under peculiar circumstances. The present government might be considered to have a greater number of personal friends and adherents in Parliament than any Government ever possessed before, and probably ever would again. Notwithstanding all this, that the present Parliament was not easily managed by the Government had been sufficiently proved. There had been occasions on which even three brothers of members of the Cabinet had voted against the government. The hon. member for Lambeth had stated that the triennial act, so far from having diminished, had extended the time of the duration of Parliaments. What was the fact? In former times there was no limitation of the time of duration, but that, which depended on the will of the crown. But under a triennial act, 30 points of fact, they would have Parliaments lasting only a year and a half. Such, indeed, must be the result of fixing three years as the maximum of duration, and fixing no minimum. Surely those favourable to triennial parliaments ought to be content, it being indispensible that at this moment, taking the average, we had had triennial parliaments for the last thirty-five years. The hon. member had alluded to the changes which might take place in the house at the expiration of seven years; but this was perhaps the strongest argument that could be used against the proposition of the hon. member. Triennial parliaments would be constantly sending into the house new members ignorant of the business. Then the time of the house would be consumed and wasted in balloting, in election petitions, and election committees. Such would be the embarrassments consequent on triennial parliaments; and in their results they would be calculated neither to confer honour on themselves nor advantage on the country. Another of the evils would be the total ruin of men of moderate fortunes by the frequency of contested elections. The reasons for repealing the triennial act were fully given in the preamble to the bill brought in for that purpose in the first year of the reign of George the First. The words were—"And whereas it has been found by experience that the said (the three year) clause hath proved very grievous and burthensome by occasioning much greater and more continued expenses in order to election of members to serve in Parliament, and more violent and lasting heats and animosities among the subjects of this realm than were ever known before the said clause was enacted." &c. Such were the evils avowedly consequent on triennial parliaments. But this was not the whole of the evil. The consequences to the country, occasioned by the frequency of elections, were even worse than the consequences to the candidates. Not thousands, but millions, were wasted in various modes of expenditure. If (as there was every likelihood there would be under a triennial act) an election occurred once in every two years, to what a state of distraction and demoralization would not the country be reduced? The positions of society would be totally changed, and the seats now filled in that house by country gentlemen would be occupied by pettifoggish attorneys. Where were the petitions which should express the sense of the country upon this measure? Until to-night, though he looked through the report of the committee upon public petitions, he was not aware that there were any. For these reasons, therefore, he would oppose the motion of the hon. member for Lambeth.

Lord DALMENY was of opinion that the very passing of the reform bill precluded the necessity of the proposed measure, and furnished sufficient reason why it should be negatived by the house. Whence, he should wish to know, had arisen the distrust and suspicion which the proposed measure involved, and upon which only it could be founded? The first Triennial Parliament was a consequence of the despotism which had been attempted at that period; and though then, as an instrument used against tyranny, it might have been praiseworthy and valuable, its nature was now altered by the altered circumstances of the times. (Hear, hear.) The duties of the house had greatly increased since that period, and required more experience for their performance than the new persons sent in by more frequent elections could bring to it. The evils of frequent elections were in themselves very great, and the effect they would produce upon the members of that house would be most injurious. The

opinions of those who sat in that house should not be the result of dictation, nor should members of that house come into a deliberative assembly as mere delegates. Such men were not representatives of their constituents. They stood to them in the relation of the slave to his master, and not in that of the free agent to his employer. (Cheers.) The majority of that house might differ from the people, and differ wisely from them; but the people, when their passions had subsided, would acknowledge the wisdom of their decision. On one great occasion, the granting of Catholic emancipation, this had been the case. (Hear, hear.) He was surprised to observe that the Irish members had not joined in that cheer. (A laugh.) The house should recollect that there was no short run by which gentlemen could arrive at the knowledge of a statesman's duties. To practice a mere handicraft trade required an apprenticeship of seven years; and was it to be supposed that a knowledge of state business could be acquired in almost as many hours? (Hear, hear.) If the triennial system were adopted, there would be no end to the changes it would occasion. On every, the slightest ground, or supposed ground of offence, and whilst the minds of the electors were warm upon the subject, their representatives would be dismissed, and there was permitted for the return of kniffler and more dissipationary feelings. (Hear, hear.) The right honourable gentleman who brought forward this proposition, said that parliaments had never been so good as when they were triennial. Now, he should like to know what good these Triennial Parliaments had effected? Was not their whole time spent in legislating against their own corruption? (Hear, hear.) It had been said, that if the parliamentary period were abridged, the influence of public opinion would be thereby extended; but honourable gentlemen should learn to distinguish between public opinion and clamour; the latter was loud and impetuous, the former, slow and silent, and was in contrast as thoughtful intelligence and eloquence. Before they proceeded with such a measure, would it not be prudent to let the reform bill have a fair trial. For himself, he would conclude by protesting against any attempt to make an organic change in the constitution on mere speculations of probability. The noble lord, in concluding, was loudly cheered by the house.

Mr. EWART would support the measure, because the sympathies between the representatives and their constituents would be more increased by that than by septennial Parliaments. (Hear, hear.) This was the doctrine of Mr. Pitt in his earlier political life, and it was a doctrine also maintained by the noble paymaster of the forces. Reform, instead of being an argument against, was an argument in favour of the shortened duration of Parliaments; because by that reform the nomination boroughs were done away with. (Hear, hear.) This, therefore, was a measure which demanded the support of all sincere reformers.

Mr. BUCKINGHAM said it had been objected by the hon. and gallant gentleman (the member for Worcester) to the proposed measure, that it would destroy the independence of the hon. and gallant member seated by independence. If he meant that the Parliament should be independent of the King, it was a constitutional doctrine; if of the Peers, it was a doctrine still more unconstitutional; but if he meant it should be independent of the people, it was a doctrine most unconstitutional. (Cheers.) So far from thinking, as had been urged, that the frequency of elections would lead to great excitement, riot, and debauchery, he thought it would have a tendency to correct that evil, which might be mainly attributed to the excitement attendant on the present infrequency and novelty of such scenes. In short, the same more difficultly likely to arise from elections for members of Parliament at short intervals, than now arose from the election of bank directors and other public functionaries. The noble lord had endeavoured to draw a distinction between public opinion and popular clamour. It was easy to apply either term, but it was not always so easy to distinguish the difference. When the people cried out for the reform bill, the Tories pronounced it to be an unthinking clamour; whereas those who wanted the support of the people, hailed it as the expression of an enlightened and intelligent public opinion. Then it was worshipped as the vox Populi, vox Dei; but now, when the same opinion was turned against them, it was no longer recognized as public opinion, but denounced as mere popular clamour. (Hear, hear.) The objection that it would tend to make members of Parliament mere delegates, was, he thought, equally unavailing. Members were sent to that house to represent their constituents, and were therefore, bound to give expression to the will of their constituents.

Sir D. SANDFORD said that if members newly entering that house were unfit for legislation, many of those who had been some time in it were unfit for argument, for he had not heard one single convincing argument that night against the motion of the right hon. gentleman, the member for Lambeth. The object of the constituencies was to select men who were well acquainted with political subjects; and in proof of his position he might observe, that no Parliament entertained measures of greater consequence than those which came under consideration of the reformed Parliament during the first session of their inexperience. (Hear, hear.) Amongst others he might refer to the Irish coercion bill and the slavery abolition bill, which were introduced whilst the members were quite new to their duties. The hon. and gallant gentleman had proved that the duration of the septennial act, made it virtually a triennial one. But though this might be the average, none of those Parliaments sat out all their time, and he could say with great confidence that those which sat longest least satisfied the wants of the people. But said the hon. and gallant gentleman, if you pass a triennial bill the result will be biennial Parliaments. This was certainly not desired. They wanted triennial Parliaments, precisely, and therefore, he wished the legal duration to be made quadrennial, for he saw no reason why they should not recognize in principle, what had been admitted to work well in practice. (Hear, hear.) One of the topics of the noble lord's (Dalmeny) speech was that some allowance should be made for the enactment of the septennial bill, inasmuch as the change followed a period of revolution, when tyranny had

just been banished from the country, and a great change had taken place in the condition of the people.

Lord DALMENY—I said, "We had just emerged from regal tyranny."

Sir D. SANDFORD—Well, what matter; whether the tyranny from which we had emerged were regal or oligarchical, made no difference; a great change had recently taken place in the condition of the people, and the same reason applied for a change in the duration of Parliaments. (Hear, hear.) But the noble lord had seemed to think that the voice of the people should be disregarded, and when they sought what he did not think it convenient to grant, the noble lord reversed the maxim—*regis populus vox diaboli*. The Noble Lord thought the tendency of this measure would be to convert Members of Parliament too much into a species of delegates. He (Sir D. Sandford) thought that this bill would have the effect of making Members of Parliament more independent than they were before. What was it made the people so jealous, so doubtful, so anxious to bind down their representatives, but the length of the time for which they were to be entrusted with an uncontrolled exercise of power—(hear, hear)—and what would be the feelings of confidence and gratitude which they most entertain towards men who should return to their constituents, and tell them they might have retained our power seven years, but we return it into your hands at the end of three. (Hear, hear.) He urged the house and he urged Ministers to consent to this motion, for the sake of their own characters. He assured his Majesty's Government that there was a strong feeling prevailing in the country against them, in consequence of a supposed adhesion on their part to Tory principles, and he feared that if they failed from acting up in office to their professions when out of office—if they determined on using their influence to oppose this motion, they would destroy the last remaining link of affection that bound them to the people of this country. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. JAMES said he should vote for shortening the duration of parliaments. The house had heard many propositions; some proposed five years, some four, and the right hon. mover three. He believed no one had proposed six years. Now he should prefer five years to seven—(laughter)—but he should prefer five to six, four to five, and three to four. (Cries of hear, hear.) He was not at present inclined to go beyond that; but he had a plan which he intended to propose in committee, if the bill went so far, that one-third of the members of this house, to be selected by ballot, should go out in rotation annually. (A laugh.) It would avoid the bustle and turmoil of a number of contested elections, and, in his opinion, was better than any plan which had yet been proposed. (Hear, hear.)

Lord ALTHORP said, he did not mean for one moment to deny that he had, at different times, voted for the repeal of the septennial act. (Hear, hear.) He had voted thus during the continuance of an unreformed parliament; and he would state distinctly the grounds on which he did so. He never then entertained the least hope of carrying the great measure of parliamentary reform; and knowing that so large a portion of the then members of that house were sent there on the nomination of individuals, he thought it desirable that the power of the people over those whom they did actually elect should be increased to the greatest possible extent. (Hear, hear.) It was not sufficient to prove that at any former period of our history septennial parliaments were established either rightly or wrongly; the question was, would it now be advantageous to resort to triennial parliaments or not? He was of opinion on the whole, judging from the feeling and conduct of parliament, that at the present moment the influence of the constituency in that house was as great as was desirable for carrying on the government of the country. (Hear, hear, from the opposition members, and counter cheers.) He knew very well that gentlemen who were in the habit of voting in a minority in that house never thought that to be the case. It was natural inference. (A laugh.) Gentlemen who found the decision of the house directly against their opinions, were no doubt apt to think that the house decided against the opinion of the people at large. It was possible that on some individual questions the house might decide against the opinions of the people; but the question was, whether, taking all the circumstances of those questions into consideration, the decision of the house was not such as should command the favourable opinion of the public, and such as was likely ultimately to obtain it? It did not appear to him that there was anything peculiar to the present time which made it desirable to discuss this question. The honourable member for Paisley stated, in answer to an observation of his noble friend's (Lord Dalmeny), viz.—"that the septennial bill was passed immediately after our emancipation from regal despotism"—that we had now but just been emancipated from oligarchical despotism. He certainly might fairly be supposed to estimate the benefits of the reform bill as highly as any one, but he would not go so far as to say that we had emerged from a state of despotism though we had emerged from a state of oligarchical influence, greatly mischievous to the country, yet he could not describe it as despotism, nor compare it to what occurred during the times of Charles II. and James II. (Hear, hear.) He would not disguise from the house that the effect of the septennial bill had been to increase the influence of the crown. (Hear, hear.) But the real question before the house was, whether, in the present state of the country, the popular voice had not sufficient influence in that house, or whether the influence of the crown there was too great? His opinion, from everything he thought that he had seen, was that neither of these contingencies was likely to occur. His argument was this, that although, when the powers of the crown were as great as they were before the passing of the reform bill, and the people did not in fact elect their representatives, it might be desirable to give additional power to the people; yet now that the people did elect their representatives, the power which the people formed was quite sufficient under the septennial bill. Those hon. members who thought that the opinion of the people on every question considered in that house ought to be immediately

resorted to, ought, if they supported any change, in all, to support annual parliaments; for the question of whether the parliament instead of continuing seven years, should continue only five, or four, or three years, was merely a question of degree; and, in his opinion, those who thought with him that the members of that house ought to act according to their deliberate judgment, and not from any sudden or immediate impulse out of doors, had heard nothing to prove that seven years was too long a period for the duration of Parliament. On these grounds he should object to the proposition of the honourable member for Lambeth.

Mr. O'CONNELL, in answer to the last argument of the noble lord, would beg to ask whether the members of that house came there to do their own business, or to do the business of the people? In his opinion, it was to treat the people with contempt to talk of the necessity, on the part of that house, of guarding against the follies and weaknesses of the people. Particular constituencies might have prejudicial and partial views; but the great aggregate of the constituencies of the country could have no object but the public good. Was that exactly the case in that house? Was it not possible that in that house private interests might occasionally militate against the public good? Did no personal advantage ever result from voting with the treasury bench? Had government no colonies for young lords—no ships for captains—no regiments for colonels—no official situations for lawyers or attorneys? (Hear, hear.) Why the present government had more extensive patronage than any of their predecessors. Government had the patronage of England, of Scotland, of Ireland, and of the East and West Indies. Under those circumstances, was there in the duration of parliament for seven years a sufficient security for the honesty and independence of the members of whom it was composed? Yet how could they deny that the people had a right to possess a control over that house; for it was the house of the people. The members of that house were trustees for the people; and the objection to their remaining too long in their office was, that, like other trustees, they might be apt to fall into the error of thinking that the property placed in their hands was their own. (A laugh.) Would any hon. member think of appointing a steward or a land agent irrespectively for seven years? Seven years was too long a period for the duration of parliament. Even three years was too long, but he preferred that period to one year, because it had a precedent in those good times to which it was desirable to return.

Mr. O'REILLY entirely dissented from the doctrine of the hon. and learned member for Dublin. He contended that the members of that house were the free and independent representatives of the people; and that they ought not to be treated as attorneys or servants. If annual parliaments were substituted for the present system, the members of that house would consist either of persons of immense property, who would buy the votes of their constituents, or persons of no property, who would pander to the prejudices and passions of the people.

Mr. ROCHES supported the motion.

Mr. SHELL contended that the admission made by the noble lord, that he had voted for abridging the duration of parliaments before the passing of the reform bill, was in favour of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Lambeth. For what change had the reform bill made which should induce the noble lord, and those who formerly supported the abridgment of parliaments, to change their minds and oppose it? The noble lord said, that it was because the influence of the crown and the aristocracy had been diminished, and because the influence of the people had been increased. Was that true? During the debates on the reform bill they had been told by the opponents of the measure that its tendency would be to augment the influence of the aristocracy; and recent events had gone far to prove that such was actually the case. And had the influence of the crown been diminished? Why the access which had been passed by the present parliament absolutely unopposed with placement. Instead of going into any abstracts, the best way was to ask the question, whether the present Parliament ought to have seven years? What had it done? It had renewed the bank charter; it had passed the West India bill, and the East India bill; and it was considering the poor law bill, and the local courts' bill. But had it no account to settle with the people? How many members of that house owed their seats to the Dissenting Interest? If they repudiated the claims of the Dissenters, and then remained in parliament for five years longer, would not the passions of the people be increased, would not their resentment be embittered during that long period? He was utterly at a loss to understand, and the extraordinary metamorphosis which his Majesty's ministers had undergone on the subject of reform. Their efforts to obtain a reformed parliament had been bold and determined; but now that they had obtained it, and that they were urged to go on, they shrunk from the proposition of the hon. member for Lambeth. His Majesty's ministers ought to know that the public opinion was very decided on this question. His Majesty's ministers ought also to know that there was a great change in public opinion with respect to themselves, and that the confidence which the people had formerly reposed in them was materially diminished. Did they suppose that the way to remedy the evil, and to diminish the distrust which the people began to entertain with respect to them, was to oppose such a proposition as that under consideration?

Mr. STANLEY observed that the hon. and learned member for Tipperary, had told them that the public feeling had undergone a great and substantial change on the subject of the duration of parliaments. He (Mr. Stanley) had, however, yet to learn, either from outward indications or from the nature of the attendance in the house that evening, that such was the case. In the present year, when the hon. and learned member for Tipperary asserted that a great change had taken place in the opinions of the people, and that parliaments and government had lost the confidence of the people, there was, neither for quinquennial, nor for quadrennial, nor for triennial, nor for biennial, nor for annual, nor for (what the

hon. member thought) to be immediately

resorted to, ought, if they supported any change, in all, to support annual parliaments; for the question of whether the parliament instead of continuing seven years, should continue only five, or four, or three years, was merely a question of degree; and, in his opinion, those who thought with him that the members of that house ought to act according to their deliberate judgment, and not from any sudden or immediate impulse out of doors, had heard nothing to prove that seven years was too long a period for the duration of Parliament. On these grounds he should object to the proposition of the honourable member for Lambeth.

Mr. O'CONNELL, in answer to the last argument of the noble lord, would beg to ask whether the members of that house came there to do their own business, or to do the business of the people? In his opinion, it was to treat the people with contempt to talk of the necessity, on the part of that house, of guarding against the follies and weaknesses of the people. Particular constituencies might have prejudicial and partial views; but the great aggregate of the constituencies of the country could have no object but the public good. Was that exactly the case in that house? Was it not possible that in that house private interests might occasionally militate against the public good? Did no personal advantage ever result from voting with the treasury bench? Had government no colonies for young lords—no ships for captains—no regiments for colonels—no official situations for lawyers or attorneys? (Hear, hear.) Why the present government had more extensive patronage than any of their predecessors. Government had the patronage of England, of Scotland, of Ireland, and of the East and West Indies. Under those circumstances, was there in the duration of parliament for seven years a sufficient security for the honesty and independence of the members of whom it was composed? Yet how could they deny that the people had a right to possess a control over that house; for it was the house of the people. The members of that house were trustees for the people; and the objection to their remaining too long in their office was, that, like other trustees, they might be apt to fall into the error of thinking that the property placed in their hands was their own. (A laugh.) Would any hon. member think of appointing a steward or a land agent irrespectively for seven years? Seven years was too long a period for the duration of parliament. Even three years was too long, but he preferred that period to one year, because it had a precedent in those good times to which it was desirable to return.

Mr. O'REILLY entirely dissented from the doctrine of the hon. and learned member for Dublin. He contended that the members of that house were the free and independent representatives of the people; and that they ought not to be treated as attorneys or servants. If annual parliaments were substituted for the present system, the members of that house would consist either of persons of immense property, who would buy the votes of their constituents, or persons of no property, who would pander to the prejudices and passions of the people.

Mr. ROCHES supported the motion.

Mr. SHELL contended that the admission made by the noble lord, that he had voted for abridging the duration of parliaments before the passing of the reform bill, was in favour of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Lambeth. For what change had the reform bill made which should induce the noble lord, and those who formerly supported the abridgment of parliaments, to change their minds and oppose it? The noble lord said, that it was because the influence of the crown and the aristocracy had been diminished, and because the influence of the people had been increased. Was that true? During the debates on the reform bill they had been told by the opponents of the measure that its tendency would be to augment the influence of the aristocracy; and recent events had gone far to prove that such was actually the case. And had the influence of the crown been diminished? Why the access which had been passed by the present parliament absolutely unopposed with placement. Instead of going into any abstracts, the best way was to ask the question, whether the present Parliament ought to have seven years? What had it done? It had renewed the bank charter; it had passed the West India bill, and the East India bill; and it was considering the poor law bill, and the local courts' bill. But had it no account to settle with the people? How many members of that house owed their seats to the Dissenting Interest? If they repudiated the claims of the Dissenters, and then remained in parliament for five years longer, would not the passions of the people be increased, would not their resentment be embittered during that long period? He was utterly at a loss to understand, and the extraordinary metamorphosis which his Majesty's ministers had undergone on the subject of reform. Their efforts to obtain a reformed parliament had been bold and determined; but now that they had obtained it, and that they were urged to go on, they shrunk from the proposition of the hon. member for Lambeth. His Majesty's ministers ought to know that the public opinion was very decided on this question. His Majesty's ministers ought also to know that there was a great change in public opinion with respect to themselves, and that the confidence which the people had formerly reposed in them was materially diminished. Did they suppose that the way to remedy the evil, and to diminish the distrust which the people began to entertain with respect to them, was to oppose such a proposition as that under consideration?

Mr. STANLEY observed that the hon. and learned member for Tipperary, had told them that the public feeling had undergone a great and substantial change on the subject of the duration of parliaments. He (Mr. Stanley) had, however, yet to learn, either from outward indications or from the nature of the attendance in the house that evening, that such was the case. In the present year, when the hon. and learned member for Tipperary asserted that a great change had taken place in the opinions of the people, and that parliaments and government had lost the confidence of the people, there was, neither for quinquennial, nor for quadrennial, nor for triennial, nor for biennial, nor for annual, nor for (what the

hon. member thought) to be immediately

resorted to, ought, if they supported any change, in all, to support annual parliaments; for the question of whether the parliament instead of continuing seven years, should continue only five, or four, or three years, was merely a question of degree; and, in his opinion, those who thought with him that the members of that house ought to act according to their deliberate judgment, and not from any sudden or immediate impulse out of doors, had heard nothing to prove that seven years was too long a period for the duration of Parliament. On these grounds he should object to the proposition of the honourable member for Lambeth.

Mr. O'CONNELL, in answer to the last argument of the noble lord, would beg to ask whether the members of that house came there to do their own business, or to do the business of the people? In his opinion, it was to treat the people with contempt to talk of the necessity, on the part of that house, of guarding against the follies and weaknesses of the people. Particular constituencies might have prejudicial and partial views; but the great aggregate of the constituencies of the country could have no object but the public good. Was that exactly the case in that house? Was it not possible that in that house private interests might occasionally militate against the public good? Did no personal advantage ever result from voting with the treasury bench? Had government no colonies for young lords—no ships for captains—no regiments for colonels—no official situations for lawyers or attorneys? (Hear, hear.) Why the present government had more extensive patronage than any of their predecessors. Government had the patronage of England, of Scotland, of Ireland, and of the East and West Indies. Under those circumstances, was there in the duration of parliament for seven years a sufficient security for the honesty and independence of the members of whom it was composed? Yet how could they deny that the people had a right to possess a control over that house; for it was the house of the people. The members of that house were trustees for the people; and the objection to their remaining too long in their office was, that, like other trustees, they might be apt to fall into the error of thinking that the property placed in their hands was their own. (A laugh.) Would any hon. member think of appointing a steward or a land agent irrespectively for seven years? Seven years was too long a period for the duration of parliament. Even three years was too long, but he preferred that period to one year, because it had a precedent in those good times to which it was desirable to return.

Mr. O'REILLY entirely dissented from the doctrine of the hon. and learned member for Dublin. He contended that the members of that house were the free and independent representatives of the people; and that they ought not to be treated as attorneys or servants. If annual parliaments were substituted for the present system, the members of that house would consist either of persons of immense property, who would buy the votes of their constituents, or persons of no property, who would pander to the prejudices and passions of the people.

Mr. ROCHES supported the motion.

Mr. SHELL contended that the admission made by the noble lord, that he had voted for abridging the duration of parliaments before the passing of the reform bill, was in favour of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Lambeth. For what change had the reform bill made which should induce the noble lord, and those who formerly supported the abridgment of parliaments, to change their minds and oppose it? The noble lord said, that it was because the influence of the crown and the aristocracy had been diminished, and because the influence of the people had been increased. Was that true? During the debates on the reform bill they had been told by the opponents of the measure that its tendency would be to augment the influence of the aristocracy; and recent events had gone far to prove that such was actually the case. And had the influence of the crown been diminished? Why the access which had been passed by the present parliament absolutely unopposed with placement. Instead of going into any abstracts, the best way was to ask the question, whether the present Parliament ought to have seven years? What had it done? It had renewed the bank charter; it had passed the West India bill, and the East India bill; and it was considering the poor law bill, and the local courts' bill. But had it no account to settle with the people? How many members of that house owed their seats to the Dissenting Interest? If they repudiated the claims of the Dissenters, and then remained in parliament for five years longer, would not the passions of the people be increased, would not their resentment be embittered during that long period? He was utterly at a loss to understand, and the extraordinary metamorphosis which his Majesty's ministers had undergone on the subject of reform. Their efforts to obtain a reformed parliament had been bold and determined; but now that they had obtained it, and that they were urged to go on, they shrunk from the proposition of the hon. member for Lambeth. His Majesty's ministers ought to know that the public opinion was very decided on this question. His Majesty's ministers ought also to know that there was a great change in public opinion with respect to themselves, and that the confidence which the people had formerly reposed in them was materially diminished. Did they suppose that the way to remedy the evil, and to diminish the distrust which the people began to entertain with respect to them, was to oppose such a proposition as that under consideration?

Mr. STANLEY observed that the hon. and learned member for Tipperary, had told them that the public feeling had undergone a great and substantial change on the subject of the duration of parliaments. He (Mr. Stanley) had, however, yet to learn, either from outward indications or from the nature of the attendance in the house that evening, that such was the case. In the present year, when the hon. and learned member for Tipperary asserted that a great change had taken place in the opinions of the people, and that parliaments and government had lost the confidence of the people, there was, neither for quinquennial, nor for quadrennial, nor for triennial, nor for biennial, nor for annual, nor for (what the

hon. member thought) to be immediately

resorted to, ought, if they supported any change, in all, to support annual parliaments; for the question of whether the parliament instead of continuing seven years, should continue only five, or four, or three years, was merely a question of degree; and, in his opinion, those who thought with him that the members of that house ought to act according to their deliberate judgment, and not from any sudden or immediate impulse out of doors, had heard nothing to prove that seven years was too long a period for the duration of Parliament. On these grounds he should object to the proposition of the honourable member for Lambeth.

Mr. O'CONNELL, in answer to the last argument of the noble lord, would beg to ask whether the members of that house came there to do their own business, or to do the business of the people? In his opinion, it was to treat the people with contempt to talk of the necessity, on the part of that house, of guarding against the follies and weaknesses of the people. Particular constituencies might have prejudicial and partial views; but the great aggregate of the constituencies of the country could have no object but the public good. Was that exactly the case in that house? Was it not possible that in that house private interests might occasionally militate against the public good? Did no personal advantage ever result from voting with the treasury bench? Had government no colonies for young lords—no ships for captains—no regiments for colonels—no official situations for lawyers or attorneys? (Hear, hear.) Why the present government had more extensive patronage than any of their predecessors. Government had the patronage of England, of Scotland, of Ireland, and of the East and West Indies. Under those circumstances, was there in the duration of parliament for seven years a sufficient security for the honesty and independence of the members of whom it was composed? Yet how could they deny that the people had a right to possess a control over that house; for it was the house of the people. The members of that house were trustees for the people; and the objection to their remaining too long in their office was, that, like other trustees, they might be apt to fall into the error of thinking that the property placed in their hands was their own. (A laugh.) Would any hon. member think of appointing a steward or a land agent irrespectively for seven years? Seven years was too long a period for the duration of parliament. Even three years was too long, but he preferred that period to one year, because it had a precedent in those good times to which it was desirable to return.

Mr. O'REILLY entirely dissented from the doctrine of the hon. and learned member for Dublin. He contended that the members of that house were the free and independent representatives of the people; and that they ought not to be treated as attorneys or servants. If annual parliaments were substituted for the present system, the members of that house would consist either of persons of immense property, who would buy the votes of their constituents, or persons of no property, who would pander to the prejudices and passions of the people.

Mr. ROCHES supported the motion.

Mr. SHELL contended that the admission made by the noble lord, that he had voted for abridging the duration of parliaments before the passing of the reform bill, was in favour of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Lambeth. For what change had the reform bill made which should induce the noble lord, and those who formerly supported the abridgment of parliaments, to change their minds and oppose it? The noble lord said, that it was because the influence of the crown and the aristocracy had been diminished, and because the influence of the people had been increased. Was that true? During the debates on the reform bill they had been told by the opponents of the measure that its tendency would be to augment the influence of the aristocracy; and recent events had gone far to prove that such was actually the case. And had the influence of the crown been diminished? Why the access which had been passed by the present parliament absolutely unopposed with placement. Instead of going into any abstracts, the best way was to ask the question, whether the present Parliament ought to have seven years? What had it done? It had renewed the bank charter; it had passed the West India bill, and the East India bill; and it was considering the poor law bill, and the local courts' bill. But had it no account to settle with the people? How many members of that house owed their seats to the Dissenting Interest? If they repudiated the claims of the Dissenters, and then remained in parliament for five years longer, would not the passions of the people be increased, would not their resentment be embittered during that long period? He was utterly at a loss to understand, and the extraordinary metamorphosis which his Majesty's ministers had undergone on the subject of reform. Their efforts to obtain a reformed parliament had been bold and determined; but now that they had obtained it, and that they were urged to go on, they shrunk from the proposition of the hon. member for Lambeth. His Majesty's ministers ought to know that the public opinion was very decided on this question. His Majesty's ministers ought also to know that there was a great change in public opinion with respect to themselves, and that the confidence which the people had formerly reposed in them was materially diminished. Did they suppose that the way to remedy the evil, and to diminish the distrust which the people began to entertain with respect to them, was to oppose such a proposition as that under consideration?

Mr. STANLEY observed that the hon. and learned member for Tipperary, had told them that the public feeling had undergone a great and substantial change on the subject of the duration of parliaments. He (Mr. Stanley) had, however, yet to learn, either from outward indications or from the nature of the attendance in the house that evening, that such was the case.





On Thursday night Mr. Ward's motion in the House of Commons...

Mr. Tennyson moved for leave to bring in a bill to shorten the duration of parliaments...

Mr. Maxwell moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the distressed condition of the hand-loom weavers...

Mr. Wynn suggested that it would be prudent to postpone the further progress of the bill for a short time...

Mr. W. H. WATLEY seconded the motion, and expressed an opinion that next ought to be taken with regard to the poor laws...

Baron Pennefather sat in the court of Chancery yesterday, hearing Equity motions...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

MR. CAROLAN. We have much satisfaction in the situation of affairs...

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

POOR LAWS AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. GODSON moved an amendment to the bill of an instruction to the committee...

Mr. ROBINSON then moved the following resolutions: 1. That the report of the poor law commissioners...

On the motion that the Speaker do leave the chair...

Mr. STANLEY said the second reading of this bill had passed in a very thin House...

Mr. FINCH said the question was certainly one of great importance, and if further time were desired...

Mr. HATHCOTE thought it would be desirable to postpone the further progress of this bill...

Mr. RUTHERFORD considered this a useless and unnecessary piece of legislation...

Mr. BIRCHALL thought the bill calculated to subvert the discipline of the church...

Mr. WYNN suggested that it would be prudent to postpone the further progress of the bill...

Mr. HATHCOTE thought it would be desirable to postpone the further progress of this bill...

Mr. RUTHERFORD considered this a useless and unnecessary piece of legislation...

Mr. BIRCHALL thought the bill calculated to subvert the discipline of the church...

Mr. WYNN suggested that it would be prudent to postpone the further progress of the bill...

Mr. HATHCOTE thought it would be desirable to postpone the further progress of this bill...

Mr. GODSON moved an amendment to the bill of an instruction to the committee...

Mr. ROBINSON then moved the following resolutions: 1. That the report of the poor law commissioners...

Mr. W. H. WATLEY seconded the motion, and expressed an opinion that next ought to be taken with regard to the poor laws...

EQUITY EXCHIEFER—WEDNESDAY.

Baron Pennefather sat in the court of Chancery yesterday, hearing Equity motions...

Mr. Keating applied for a conditional order for an attachment against Mr. Roe...

Baron Pennefather observed that Mr. Keating would do well to wait until Mr. Roe was present...

THE NEW CHAPEL AT BIRR.

Our correspondent informs us of a somewhat extraordinary proceeding which took place in the chapel of Birr on Sunday last...

THE LATE MURDER AT REHILL.

Thomas Keating, of Tubrid, who is charged with the murder of Constable O'Donnell at Rehill in this county...

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a letter signed "A Gas consumer and Tax payer" on the subject of lighting the city...

PRICES OF IRISH STOCKS—MAY 17.

Table with 2 columns: Stock Name and Price. Includes Government Consols, Stock, and various bonds.

The Waterford Chronicle

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1851.

SPAIN—PORTUGAL.

The Paris Press have brought us intelligence from Madrid to the fact, but it is unimportant...

PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARY.

In the house of lords on Thursday night the examination of witnesses on the Warwick borough bill was resumed...

SALVAGE CASE.

In the great salvage case of the Marchioness Wellesley, steamer, v. the Calcutta, East India man, a judgment is to be entered by consent...

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

At the Term examination of the University which has just concluded, Messrs. Richard Mansell Arundel and James Anthony Lawson...

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a letter signed "A Gas consumer and Tax payer" on the subject of lighting the city...

PRICES OF IRISH STOCKS—MAY 17.

Table with 2 columns: Stock Name and Price. Includes Government Consols, Stock, and various bonds.

The Waterford Chronicle

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1851.

SPAIN—PORTUGAL.

The Paris Press have brought us intelligence from Madrid to the fact, but it is unimportant...

PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARY.

In the house of lords on Thursday night the examination of witnesses on the Warwick borough bill was resumed...

SALVAGE CASE.

In the great salvage case of the Marchioness Wellesley, steamer, v. the Calcutta, East India man, a judgment is to be entered by consent...

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

At the Term examination of the University which has just concluded, Messrs. Richard Mansell Arundel and James Anthony Lawson...

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a letter signed "A Gas consumer and Tax payer" on the subject of lighting the city...

PRICES OF IRISH STOCKS—MAY 17.

Table with 2 columns: Stock Name and Price. Includes Government Consols, Stock, and various bonds.

The Waterford Chronicle

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1851.

SPAIN—PORTUGAL.

The Paris Press have brought us intelligence from Madrid to the fact, but it is unimportant...

PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARY.

In the house of lords on Thursday night the examination of witnesses on the Warwick borough bill was resumed...

SALVAGE CASE.

In the great salvage case of the Marchioness Wellesley, steamer, v. the Calcutta, East India man, a judgment is to be entered by consent...

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

At the Term examination of the University which has just concluded, Messrs. Richard Mansell Arundel and James Anthony Lawson...

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a letter signed "A Gas consumer and Tax payer" on the subject of lighting the city...

PRICES OF IRISH STOCKS—MAY 17.

Table with 2 columns: Stock Name and Price. Includes Government Consols, Stock, and various bonds.

The Waterford Chronicle

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1851.

SPAIN—PORTUGAL.

The Paris Press have brought us intelligence from Madrid to the fact, but it is unimportant...

PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARY.

In the house of lords on Thursday night the examination of witnesses on the Warwick borough bill was resumed...

SALVAGE CASE.

In the great salvage case of the Marchioness Wellesley, steamer, v. the Calcutta, East India man, a judgment is to be entered by consent...

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

At the Term examination of the University which has just concluded, Messrs. Richard Mansell Arundel and James Anthony Lawson...

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received a letter signed "A Gas consumer and Tax payer" on the subject of lighting the city...

PRICES OF IRISH STOCKS—MAY 17.

Table with 2 columns: Stock Name and Price. Includes Government Consols, Stock, and various bonds.

The Waterford Chronicle

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1851.

SPAIN—PORTUGAL.

The Paris Press have brought us intelligence from Madrid to the fact, but it is unimportant...

PARLIAMENTARY SUMMARY.

In the house of lords on Thursday night the examination of witnesses on the Warwick borough bill was resumed...

SALVAGE CASE.

In the great salvage case of the Marchioness Wellesley, steamer, v. the Calcutta, East India man, a judgment is to be entered by consent...

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

At the Term examination of the University which has just concluded, Messrs. Richard Mansell Arundel and James Anthony Lawson...