

which it had in view, which was of the highest moment to the country, was that every elector should give his free unbiassed opinion in regard to the candidate for whom he voted, and it was the first duty of the Legislature to do what they could to remove the influences which tended to deprive a man of this free use of his franchise. No action of the Government would be likely to secure a greater advantage for the people than the endeavour to remove the probability of intimidation and the exercise of undue influence of every kind. There was actual intimidation or undue influence between employer and employed, between customers and tradesmen, between land lords and tenants, debtors and creditors and persons in various positions in which all knew there was an opportunity for the exercise of influence which led many electors to vote against their convictions. It was quite true that they might have elections carried on under the system of open voting without violence being used and it was quite true that if they had the ballot system sometimes violence might be used, because some men would know how others would vote; but he believed the ballot would diminish a large amount of violence that otherwise might be expected. The other great evil with which they had to contend in securing purity of election arose from bribery. They all knew how extensively bribery was used in all the elections in the country. They had had very striking illustrations of it in their own country within the last few years. (Hear, hear) While bribery was possible under any system to some extent, beyond all doubt enormous difficulties would be placed in the way of bribery by a properly constituted system of secret voting, and a very large amount of bribery that otherwise would take place would be avoided. There would be no use in paying a man \$5 or \$10 for his vote if there were no means by which the briber could afterwards tell whether the man had given his vote in favour of one candidate or the other. No doubt a system of bribery might be inaugurated by which the money should be paid in the event of the candidate, for whom the vote was purchased, being returned. Bribery of this conditional kind must be limited in its extent. None of the advocates of the Ballot Bill would say that it secured perfect freedom or security from corruption, but it did secure a very large measure of purity and freedom which an open system of voting would not. He hoped there was no member of the House who did not recognize the importance in our representative institutions of every man voting according to his convictions. They all knew, as a matter of fact, that during a canvass all sorts of personal considerations were used to make an elector vote for one candidate rather than another. But such considerations would be entirely unavailing where no one knew how the man was going to vote. Now, it was a very serious thing to know that in every general election there were thousands, probably tens of thousands, of dollars given for votes which were recorded contrary to the convictions of the electors. If a man in the exercise of this very important duty acted in opposition to his own convictions, it would have the effect of demoralizing him, and the repetition of a few elections would be quite sufficient to complete the demoralization. The whole life of every such man as this, as far as political matters were concerned, became a lie. One of the objections of the opponents of the Bill was that the franchise was a trust, and therefore ought to be exercised in the light of day. It was sometimes said that it was not correct to speak of the franchise as a trust, but for his own part, he was quite willing to recognize that as the true character of the franchise. But then he would say, its being a trust, it was their duty to see that the recipient of the trust was in a position to discharge his duty free from bias or influence by which he ought not to be influenced. They ought to see that no undue influence which would induce him to betray his trust or any consideration should be forced upon him. They knew as a matter of fact that, under the open system of voting, that trust was constantly betrayed by influences such as those he had mentioned. Another favourite objection made to the Bill was that it was more manly for a voter to go to the polls, and there publicly state the man for whom he intends voting. This was merely a sentimental objection, and had not been urged so much lately as it was at one time. If a man was free to vote as he thought fit, he would have plenty of opportunity of showing his manliness, without this matter of giving his vote in public. That was a matter that was transacted once and for all, but he would have an

opportunity in a manly way of showing his political sentiments every day of his life, and almost every hour of every day. There was no advantage of this kind by the voter being obliged to state publicly how he is going to vote. If he was free there was every opportunity for him to manifest his manliness if he desired to do so; if he was not free there was no power to compel him to vote. The next argument was that it would lead men to make false promises. They might promise to vote for a man, and then go and vote against him. Now if a promise were given honestly, and if a man were free to vote as he chose he would keep that promise whether the vote were given publicly or secretly. On the other hand, if the promise were exacted under circumstances which would not leave him free—when he had to choose between two evils, the one of breaking his promise, and the other of violating his duty to the country—and were he induced to promise that which he could not conscientiously perform, he would be doing a double wrong if he voted contrary to his convictions. (Hear, hear) When one came to propose for the first time a Bill of this nature, it became necessary to consider the different systems on which measures had been constructed for the purpose of accomplishing the ends in view. One system was that which prevailed in the United States, where a very large share of publicity belonged to the system notwithstanding the fact that the voting was nominally secret. There were many contrivances

for ascertaining how the votes were given, and it was found they did not make many mistakes in their estimates of the votes recorded. Each candidate or party provided voting papers, and these were distributed to those going to support the candidates. These papers were of different shapes and printed on different coloured paper, and it was easy to ascertain for whom the vote was given. There was little or no contrivance for the purpose of preventing stuffing the ballot-boxes, and it was important that they should have a system by which this evil would be avoided. Then they knew that where this system prevailed in the United States, there was stuffing of the ballot boxes, and there was no way in their system of remedying this. Whoever by fraudulent means got 1,000 votes put into the ballot boxes, obtained a decided advantage. If 1,000 forged ballot papers were put into the ballot box on behalf of a certain candidate, and out of that box 1,000 papers were drawn indiscriminately, a very large number of votes belonging to the other side would be drawn out. So there was a large gain in favour of the guilty. There were other evils arising from that system. There was a constant personation of voters, and there were numerous instances where men had voted many times, and there was no way of preventing this. In consequence of these evils it was desirable that they should find a system in which they could be prevented or greatly diminished. Stuffing the ballot boxes with forged ballots should be nearly impossible. Hon. members were aware that in some of the Australian colonies a system was adopted by which those evils of the ordinary ballot system were avoided to a very large extent. When this system was shown to be a success, and an improvement on the old system many of its old opponents were converted, and it was adopted in England. In that system ballot papers were prepared by the Returning-officer, and no ballot-papers which were prepared by the candidates or taken to the poll by the voter were allowed to be used. He was compelled to make use of the papers given to him for the purpose by the Returning-officer or his deputy. Then there was a contrivance by which, without interfering to any important extent with the secrecy of the voting, it could be ascertained if any man gave a vote without having the right to give it; and on its being adjudged that the voter had no right to vote, and that the vote was a bad one, it could be ascertained for whom that vote was given; thereby that evil was prevented. The mode of procedure was shortly this:—The ballot-papers were printed with counterfoils, and to every counterfoil there was a number corresponding to the written or printed part of the ballot paper, so that when the Returning-officer gave the ballot paper to the voter he went into his private apartment, and there put a cross to the name of the candidate he intended to vote for. After having filled up the ballot paper, he handed it to the Returning-officer, who identifies it by having his initials upon it, or by some other means. He then drops it into the ballot box in the presence of the candidates or their agents. If it was found, on a subsequent occasion, that the majority was small, and if it is believed that proof can be given that there are 100 bad votes, and