To place at the head of the united branches no man could be found more admirably suited than Mr. J. Rose-Innes, the president of the South African Political Association of Cape Town, if he were found willing to accept the post.

Form Associations.

I think as a first and practical step towards this larger union it would be desirable that wherever possible, in towns or districts, a few progressive men should join together and form Progressive Associations, however small in size, analogous to those now existing in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. It

would then be desirable that these bodies should enter into communication with each other, and draw up a body of principles broad enough to make it possible for every really progressive individual to subscribe to them, and distinct enough to make it quite impossible for any thoroughly non-progressive person to enter the organisation. These principles, I think, should be made the basis of all future organisation.

As a second step, I think it would be advisable that, if possible, a delegate should be appointed to visit each town and village in the Colony to attempt to inaugurate a branch of our

organisation, however small, in that place. The advantage of this course is obvious. It is often difficult for any individual in a small Colonial town to rise up and inaugurate a movement of any kind, unless he chance to be of exceptional importance, monetarily or otherwise, in the place. In many towns there may be even a large number of individuals, progressive at heart, who would join such an organisation, and who would labour for it vigorously and be able to extend its growth, who yet might not feel themselves in a position to rise up and take the initiative in instating it.

It may be objected that, in

places where the branch would at first consist of only a dozen individuals, it would be useless, and serve only to show the barrenness of the land !

But, firstly, while an organisation consisting of a dozen isolated individuals in some town or village might be of small importance in itself, connected as it would ultimately be with the organisations in larger towns throughout the country, its strength would be largely increased ; and it would form the germ of what might in time become an extensive growth. It is exactly that we may not lose these driblets of progressive thought and feeling

all over the Colony that I would advocate the endeavour to start such small branch organisations.

If further it be asked, What the principles are which are broad enough to unite all the Progressive Elements in the country? I think an answer will not be very difficult.

There are one or two principles subscription to which will make a man a Liberal and Progressive in any country in the world. Their practical application will vary infinitely according to the conditions of the Society in which they are applied ; but they are as simple as universal.

The fundamental principle [1] upon which Progressive Liberalism all the world over is based, whether consciously or unconsciously, and to which it must finally return if it would justify its varying forms of practical action, is the axiom, however variously worded, which asserts that the mental and physical welfare and happiness of hu-

[1] There is also that ancient categorical imperative which has lain behind the Liberalism of all religious natures from the days of Buddha and Confucius to that of Jesus and the Socialistic movement of to-day—"Do ye unto others as ye would they should do unto you"—and which, perhaps, after all, is the most satisfactory statement of the fundamental principle of Liberalism yet formulated.

manity as a whole is the end of all wisely directed human effort, whether of individuals or nations; that one of the main aims of all government must be the defence of its weaker members from the depredations of the stronger, and that no course of action which bases the welfare of sections of the community on the sufferings and loss of other sections is justifiable.

Analysis shows that it is upon this wide principle, however worded, that all forms of Modern Liberalism are ultimately based. It is by their more or less complete harmony with it that the thoroughness

of their Liberalism may be tested. Nevertheless, it is perhaps too wide a principle on which to base directly a practical organisation intended for the many ; more especially in a country where some men's conceptions with regard to Liberal Progressivism are somewhat indefinite—a prominent public man having declared that he considered himself a Progressive because he voted for the construction of railways which would be for his own pecuniary benefit.

Three Test Questions.

In the Cape Colony, and for such an Association as we pro-

pose, there are, I think, three subjects, a man's attitude with regard to which would amply suffice to show his adherence or otherwise to this fundamental principle underlying all Liberalism; and which, I think, would be adequate as a test of the fitness of any individual for membership in a Progressive Organisation.

The first of these is the Labour Question; the question of the relation between the propertied, and therefore powerful, class, and the less propertied, and therefore weaker, class.

In South Africa this question assumes gigantic importance, including as it does almost the

whole of what is popularly termed the Native Question; that question being indeed only the Labour Question of Europe complicated by a difference of race and colour between the employing and propertied, and the employed and poorer classes.

There are two attitudes with regard to the treatment of this Native Labouring Class: the one held by the Retrogressive Party in this country regards the Native as only to be tolerated in consideration of the amount of manual labour which can be extracted from him; and desires to obtain the largest amount of labour at the cheapest rate possible; and rigidly resists

all endeavours to put him on an equality with the white man in the eye of the law. The other attitude, which I hold must inevitably be that of every truly progressive individual in this country, is that which regards the Native, though an alien in race and colour and differing fundamentally from ourselves in many respects, yet as an individual to whom we are under certain obligations: it forces on us the conviction that our superior intelligence and culture render it obligatory upon us to consider his welfare; and to carry out such measures, not as shall make him merely more useful to ourselves, but

such as shall tend also to raise him in the scale of existence, and bind him to ourselves in a kindlier fellowship.

As a man takes one or other of these attitudes I believe he will find himself in accord, not merely with the Progressive Element in this country, but with the really advanced and Progressive Movement all the world over. In fact, I go so far as to think that the mere subscription to the latter mode of regarding the Labour and Native question would constitute an adequate test in this country as to a man's attitude on all other matters social and political.

The second subject is that of Taxation.

The Retrogressive holds, all the world over, that taxation may be levied for the benefit of the few. The Progressive attitude is that which holds that taxation should fall upon the luxuries rather than upon the necessaries of life; that it should not press more heavily upon the poor than upon the wealthy; and that the principle of protection, worked so as to increase the wealth of certain sections of the community at the expense of others, is at all points to be fought.

The third subject upon which I believe the views of every ad-

vanced Progressive must and will coincide is that of enfranchisement.

No man who does not hold that as a State develops its electoral basis should be extended to obviate the possibility of the claims of the unrepresented classes being ignored, and their welfare subordinated to that of represented, though smaller classes, and who does not hold that Parliamentary representation should increasingly tend to represent individuals rather than property, can find himself in harmony with the principles of any real Progressive Organisation.

It may be said that these

principles are too vague; that the articles to which a man would have to subscribe before joining such an organisation should be more detailed.

But I think a little consideration will show that upon all the practical questions which have been brought before our Colonial Legislature during the last few years, subscription to these three principles of action would have determined a man's attitude. The Labour Tax, Haarhoff's Curfew Bell, the Bread and Meat Tax, the Strop Bill, the Scab Act, &c.—on all these a man's position will be certainly and at once determined by the fact of his being willing

to subscribe to these three principles. A more detailed test for fitness of membership in the organisation would, I think, be superfluous.

But it may, on the other hand, be objected that these tests would be too stringent; that certain men would be found quite willing to join a so-called Progressive and anti-Bond Party who at the same time might not be willing to subscribe to one or all these tests.

Now to these I would unhesitatingly answer: That such men are not wanted in our organisation; men who, while holding retrogressive views on the most

important social questions, but prompted by an unworthy racial prejudice, would attempt to join or use the organisation for racial purposes, hoping to oppose or weaken the party behind the Bond, are precisely that class of persons we should seek to exclude from our organisation. They would weaken us, and defeat that very end for which the organisation was formed. It must of necessity be a first principle of such an association as we wish to see started that no racial or class distinction of any kind should concern it, or be allowed to weigh with us. We should rejoice as cordially to welcome

and support the Dutchmen as the Englishmen; the newcomer as the old inhabitant of the country; the man as the woman; the wealthy as the indigent. Our sole requirement from any individual wishing to join us, or seeking our support, should be, Does he share our principles? If he does, he is one of us; if he does not, though he should call himself a Progressive leader, and though he should be seven times over an Englishman, he is not of us.

If it be further suggested that, by pursuing this course, we should alienate large bodies of persons who would otherwise append themselves to us, and

who might ultimately so swell our numbers as to make us the dominant party in the State, I would frankly reply that no mere increase of bulk could compensate us for degeneracy in fibre, and that we do not desire the adhesion of such individuals to our party. Our strength will not, and cannot, rest upon mere numbers. It must lie in the enthusiasm, in the superior intelligence, in the unwavering adhesion to impersonal aims, and in the close-knit union of our members.

The Progressive Element in this country is, and must be for many years to come, necessarily in a minority, exactly as the

extreme Non-Progressive Element is in a minority. Between us lies the large inert body of politicians and private persons, indifferent to any aims but those of personal success, and the person of sincere but very mixed convictions. This body follows to-day the Non-Progressive Party, because it is the only vigorous and unbending political organisation existent in the country. If to-morrow there were in the field a small but vigorous Progressive Party, well organised, and not willing to capitulate upon any terms, this inert, self-seeking body might also find it useful to serve us ; it might

even ultimately give to us the appearance of being the majority in the State, exactly as it to-day does to the Retrogressive Party. But as from the day on which the extreme Retrogressive Party shall resign its principles, and with a feeble opportunism shall receive into its own organisation this inert mass, the day of its dissolution and disappearance from Governmental control will have arrived; so also with the Progressive Party. From the day on which it sacrifices its position as the enlightened leading minority, and modifies its principles for the purpose of making them acceptable to the indifferent

majority in the country, from that moment it will have nullified the aim with which it was started, and all its powers of accomplishment.

I think we cannot too strongly impress upon, and hold up before ourselves, the fact that such a Progressive Party as we hope to see in this country can only maintain its power by firm adhesion to its own principles, and not by any dependence on numbers.

If it be questioned how, in default of large numbers, we expect to exert influence and make our principles operative in the country, I would reply, that for many years our primary

practical aim must be the attempt to educate public opinion up to our own standpoint.

Our means for accomplishing this would, it appears to me, be mainly three.

Firstly. We shall form a centre, however small, in every town or village from which, by the exercise of personal influence, the view of life which the organisation represents would tend to spread, and however small the branch might be, it would keep before the eye of the public the fact that such a view did exist.

Secondly. We should use the Press.

Use the Press.

The great strength of such a party as the Progressive Party of South Africa must be would lie in the superior intellectual enlightenment of its members. I take it that it is not likely any large body of men will join such an organisation who have not the intelligence and culture which would enable them to think somewhat deeply upon social matters. I believe we should largely represent the thinking element in the community, whether our members were drawn from the labouring or wealthier class.

Such a body, with no narrow

personal ends to seek, will naturally desire the largest publicity for its views, and will also have the power of expressing them. Of such a party the main weapon is the Press. It will find one of its chief duties for many years in constantly raising and animating public discussion upon all questions, social and political, as they arise, and in unflinchingly enunciating its own views, and calling forth the enunciation of those of others—a function of paramount importance in a country where men often, even in private conversation, fear to speak above their breath, lest a bird of the air should carry it.

We shall make rich use of all the public journals in the country. But if the Progressive Party is to become a power which shall make itself felt, I believe its most powerful weapon must be the possession of a journal devoted entirely to its principles.

With a very few exceptions there is a generous attitude maintained in Colonial papers, and their columns are freely open to correspondents. We are rich in able and liberal editors, and our Press in many ways is in advance of other Colonial institutions. But the fact, which all who have been behind the scenes of Press life

in this country are aware of (and of which the public appears *not* to be aware !), is that no editor, however able and advanced, has, as a rule, an absolute control over his paper. In the vast majority of cases in the Colony, as in England, the newspaper is a property held by a larger or smaller number of shareholders ; it is finally theirs, and should the editor himself be a large shareholder, he has yet not always an independent and free hand. A certain amount of liberty is granted him, and he may imagine himself independent ; but when crucial commercial or political questions arise, at the

very moment when he would most desire to stand firm, and unqualifiedly to express his own views, those persons with whom the real and ultimate control rests may step in; and whether simply fearing that the commercial value of the paper may decline if an unpopular course be persisted in; or, immeasurably worse still, actuated by personal motives, may desire to use the paper for their own commercial or political benefit —then he may be required to alter his tone or remain silent.

No knowledge of the high principle and personal integrity of an editor can give the public assurance that personal influ-

ences may not be compelling him to modify his course. He is often but an able and highly accredited agent; and he may, under these circumstances, conscientiously feel that he is not justified in pursuing a course which would result in commercial loss to those whose property he manages. He may throw up his control (which is often impossible), or he must remain silent. Men who would be incorruptible before any conceivable species of bribe might, nay, almost must, be amenable to this pressure of circumstances and obligations.

If a paper is to represent undeviatingly and sincerely a

certain body of opinions, it is absolutely necessary either that it should be completely under the control of one man who is wholly devoted to the body of principles to be maintained, or it must be the property of an organisation representing these principles. Even in this case, were the shares held by members of the organisation, it would be necessary for them to safeguard themselves from the possibility of individual shareholders being induced to sell their shares to the persons, or emissaries of the persons, who would be interested in vitiating the standpoint of the paper.

It would be necessary to make

it impossible for any shareholder to dispose of a share without the consent of either the Executive Committee of the Organisation, or of all other shareholders, and for any individual shareholder to possess more than a certain limited number of shares. It would then be open only to the personal corruption of individual shareholders,—a contingency against which no foresight or caution can avail, but of which there would be little danger were the original shareholders carefully selected.

A paper safeguarded through one or other of these conditions is, I believe, absolutely essential

to the real success of a Progressive Organisation. Such a paper the Progressive Element in South Africa possessed when Saul Solomon had absolute control of the *Cape Argus;* and such a paper must yet be the rallying point of the Progressive Party in this country.

The third method by which the association could impress itself upon the country would be by the share it would take in political life.

Influence Politicians!

If it be questioned how, if our numbers be too small to return a majority to the Legislative Councils and to place our

men in office, we propose to influence political life, I would reply, that we neither expect nor, for many years to come, desire to see a Ministry formed of our own men.

The truly Progressive Element in this country is to-day in a minority, of about the same numerical strength as the extreme Retrogressive Party; neither of these parties to-day is strong enough to put into office and to support, even for a time, a Ministry of its own, consistently carrying out its views. Neither of them could command so completely the Intermediate or Colourless Party as to give it a working

majority, save by bartering away the very principles, the support of which formed the sole cause of its existence.

The extreme Retrogressive Party in this country has maintained its power, as all conscientious minorities must do, by not seeking to grasp in its hands the ostensible reins of Government, and by its leaders being willing to forego the sweets of office for the sake of effectively impressing the views of the party upon successive Ministries.

By such a course of action the Irish Party, composing a minority in the Imperial Parliament, has yet for years made

itself a power, courted and feared by successive Liberal and Conservative Governments, and has been able to force its views before the public. Had its leaders as individuals thirsted, not for the success of the principles they represented, but merely to attain office in some incoming Government, they would either have had to desert their party, or their party would have been compelled to rest content with the pleasure of saying, "There are Irishmen in the Government," in place of seeing their aims upheld. Had the people of Ireland set before themselves as their main end the seeing of certain of

their representatives on the Government benches, they could only have attained it by their representatives ceasing to be Irishmen in everything but name; and the Irish vote would have been annihilated at the very moment of a shallow seeming triumph.

Such would be the fate of the truly Progressive or truly Non-Progressive party in this country, if it should set before itself, as its chief end, the placing of its own men in office.

In a country with representative institutions a minority, unless it uses force or bribery, *cannot* place its men in office, and maintain them there for

even the shortest period, without sacrificing its very existence. This is trite and obvious, but we dwell upon it because it appears often completely overlooked in the discussion of political affairs in this country; and the fatuous conception seems to prevail that a party can only affect the country and the course of legislation if some person, or persons, who ostensibly belong to its organisation, at whatever cost to its principles, hold office in the Government of the day.

The truly Progressive Element in this country will not contain within itself the large majority of the inhabitants

for the next five, ten, or perhaps even fifteen years. If the majority of our inhabitants stand, in fifteen years' time, where the majority of the inhabitants of New Zealand stand to-day, we shall feel that the richest hopes of the Progressives of this country have been fulfilled.

The part which the Progressive Association in this country will have to play, perhaps for many years, is that of a small, united party, strong in its intelligence and determination, and, above all, in the absolutely unpurchasable nature of its members. A small but united body, it would have to be

reckoned with by each successive Ministry as it took office, and, because it could neither be purchased or bent, would be a thorn in the side of every Government intent upon carrying out measures at variance with its views.

If it be asked by what exact means we could make our influence felt by these successive Ministries, I would reply that we should influence them, firstly, by our free and uncompromising discussion in the Colonial and European press of their methods of action and the measures which they introduced. In a country which is rotten with opportunism, and where

we have reached a point in which a man dares hardly to give utterance in whispers to his political convictions, and in which hundreds of men and women sit spell-bound, afraid of losing their daily bread if they utter a word in condemnation of existing powers, the fact of persistent and fearless discussion of governmental methods would render the continuance of certain existing lines of action on the part of Government almost impossible. Autocratic Governments have nothing so much to dread as free criticism.

Secondly: Our branches would form centres in every

town and village for the prompt calling of public meetings to protest against undesirable measures. Had such an organisation been in existence recently when the news reached this Colony of an unpopular appointment, instead of a knot of Progressive men in a few Colonial towns having to organise themselves into small bodies for that particular purpose, it would merely have been necessary to send the news to all branches, and within forty-eight hours, in almost every town and village in the Colony, those men who were opposed to the appointment would have met and discussed the

matter, and sent forth their protests.

Thirdly: We should influence the political world through our electoral functions.

A Group of Twelve.

I do not doubt that there would be ten or a dozen men in Parliament who would represent our views, some or all of them belonging to our organisation. These men, feeling that they had a considerable body behind them, might more easily be induced to stand firmly, and refuse all offers of office, or local and personal benefits, which could be accepted only at the

cost of laying aside their functions of criticism.

At elections we should exert our influence. In every instance we should, if we were true to our principles, throw our weight, small though it might be, into the scale of that man, whether Dutchman or Englishman, whom we could most depend upon to act in accordance with our principles or do least violence to them. Where we could not possibly return a member of our own we could, by throwing our weight in the scale of the man most desirable or least objectionable, turn many elections. If, as an organisation, we 'stood firm to our convic-

tions, we should frequently have the casting vote.

I think it will be necessary for us to set clearly before ourselves from the very start the fact that we have not organised ourselves to support any given body of politicians, but to see our policy enforced; that we have nailed to our mast-head, not the names of individuals, but a declaration of our principles. While a man acts in accordance with these, he is one of us; when he does not, then he ceases to be of us. We could as little have supported the recent Ministry under Mr. Rhodes, because three of the ablest and most liberal men of

the country bore office in it, as we could the present Ministry. The bitterest wrong which leaders can inflict upon their crew is when they take service on the enemy's ship, and prevent their fellows from attacking it, for fear of wounding them. Under such circumstances there is nothing to be done but to fire, regardless whether you bring down your own absconded leaders or the enemy; and this, even though they may have been partly actuated by a desire to impede the enemy's sailing powers when they took service.

As Progressives, we should not be moved an inch out of

our path by the fact that any man calls himself an Oppositionist, or is the member of any existing Government. We should endeavour to support or oppose any man or Ministry with strict impartiality, exactly as it opposed or supported the principles we represent. As long as a man, in any single instance, supported them, did he call himself Bondsman or Retrogressive, he should have our steadfast approval.

That captious criticism, and disingenuous judgment, which would condemn any measure brought in or supported by a member of an opposing political faction, and which is almost in-

evitable where men have turned politics into a game, and are playing to make points, should be wholly foreign to the spirit of such an organisation as our own, whose chief end should be the passing of those measures we believe beneficial, and not the seeing of those men who call themselves our representatives for the moment captains in the political game.

Were such an organisation as I have suggested formed which would draw into itself the scattered Progressive Elements throughout the whole country, despising none ; and which should seek to draw its strength, not from numbers, but from the

determination and the impersonal aims of its members; which should endeavour to influence political life without throwing itself into the whirlpool of political ambitions; and which should stand outside, consistently fighting for its own principles—such an organisation, though including perhaps at first not many noted political names, but formed of the people and for the people, would, I believe, slowly and surely grow. For the first two years our occupation would be mainly that of self-organisation, and the education of public feeling. I believe that in five years' time we should be a power in the

land, able to restore the Retrogressive Influences to that healthy and natural position in which they would form a conservative safeguard, preventing the inauguration of measures too far in advance of the social condition of the community. I believe that in fifteen or twenty years' time our aims, which now appear chimerical to a part of the community, will be then but an attempt to give voice to the convictions of the people. And this I believe is worth working and waiting for.

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