

CORRESPONDENCE.

Possibly he may consider himself bound in a strait jacket by previous public utterances in the direction in which his letter points, but that were unworthy of a candid writer of such good repute in search of legal truth. The change of his opinions in the *Letellier Case* should have taught him the lesson impressed by the judgment, that truth is many-sided; and opinions on a new Constitutional Act must vary from time to time as different and new aspects of it to different minds, under the ever varying circumstances of a new country, present themselves for decision.

The point raised, if not an entirely new one in B.C., has now been formulated in legal shape for the first time for the formal opinion of a court. It would probably not have arisen now if it had not been persistently forced on by the local authorities in spite of remonstrances well known and appreciated for the last five years past; they by their deliberate action and legislation in judicial matters, would have brought the Courts and the administration of justice to a dead-lock for the second time, but for the vigorous proceedings of the Court, which, as one of the judges said, had thereby once more opened the door of justice for all suitors in search of redress. Like many other, especially the earlier, writers on the Constitution of Canada he approaches his subject and gets at his conclusion crab-fashion, *i. e.* backwards; instead of boldly making for his port through the direct and open channel so carefully buoyed out by the framers of that organic measure—through section 91 of that Act, and the other sections in regular succession, he makes his advances first through a subordinate section (92). To that he attributes a completeness, definiteness and exclusiveness denied to it by the learned Canadian judges whose judgments paved the way and lead up to the present decisions of the B. C. Bench. The learned reviewer then construes the other sections by the reflected light thus obtained, and like our own Attorney-General in Court, can only view and construe the whole of the Act through the spectacles, or rather the blinkers, of section 92. Like that gentleman, he too entirely ignores the existence of section 91. And yet if he had really read any one of the judgments through he could not fail to have seen that section 91 was at least one main turning point of the Act. He shuts his eyes to the vast difference

between the powers of the Legislature of a Province of the Colony of Canada (which the Dominion after all is) and the surpassing power of the Imperial Parliament, and claims for the Legislature of a single Province the legislative omnipotence of the Senate of an empire. The judgment does not say that the Colony (*i. e.* the Dominion) has no power over Court and Judges, although by no means the same or co-extensive with those of the Imperial Parliament. On the contrary it points to and insists upon the existence of the Dominion powers, subject to the limitations of the organic Act.

Of what use is Mr. Todd's reference to the Australian Colonies, which are full colonies, to whom the Colonial Laws Validity Act applies, as a measure of the legislative powers of a subordinate section or province of a colony which is governed by the B. N. A. Act? Section 91, which Mr. Todd so singularly ignores, is so fully treated in the judgment that it would weary you to repeat the long string of authorities there arranged on the subject. The pith of the judgment, as it affects the Supreme Court of British Columbia, may be shortly stated; affects, though not in the same degree, more or less, all provinces beside British Columbia that are governed by the B.N.A. Act. The Local Legislature of the Province, had assumed the right to authorise the Local Executive, exclusive of the Judges, to make rules of procedure in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, and they proceeded to make such. Among others a rule restricting all appeals to the full Court, to correct the decision of a single Judge at *Nisi Prius*, which had previously been unrestricted. This restriction they made in various ways, but especially to allowing the full Court to meet once a year for 1881, in which year a full Court had presumably already been held; thereby shutting the door against discontented suitors in want of a hearing before such full Court. The *Thrasher Case* was one of these. It was contended that this assumption was unconstitutional, and unless conferred on them by sec. 92, B.N.A. Act, it was so; for the Local Legislature could not go beyond the letter of that section and sub-sections. Everything not therein specified, it was contended, was of exclusively Dominion cognizance, (sec. 91). The only sub-section of section 92 relied on was sub-section 14. Section 92 gives the Provincial Legislature power,