

think, commend themselves to the judgment of the public. This is the case, it seems to us, in regard to the modifications of the law which are intended to provide that henceforth, when land is sold by the Crown for agricultural purposes, the sale shall not carry with it the title to any mines and minerals it may be found to contain, these being constituted a separate and distinct property remaining vested in the Crown. Many may be disposed to question the wisdom of transferring mining lands absolutely to private ownership under any circumstances or conditions whatever, but if the rich mineral lands about Lake Nipissing are to be sold at all, they should surely be worth the higher prices it is now proposed to fix upon them. So, too, the provision which is intended to compel purchasers of mining lands to proceed with development within ten years, on pain of the reversion of the minerals to the Crown, will approve itself as being at least rightly directed. But to the minds of many the policy outlined in a later section, which provides that instead of selling the land in fee simple, the Crown may lease it for a term of ten years, with the right to arrange for a further term of ten years, and thereafter for subsequent terms of twenty years on a rearrangement of the rent, is the one which, under a wise and capable administration, should best subserve the two great ends of stimulating mining development and securing the widest possible distribution amongst the whole people of the advantages accruing from the possession of these vast stores of mineral wealth by the Province. The third Bill, which is merely the Mining Claims Act of 1890 reintroduced with amendments suggested last session, fixes the conditions under which mining claims may be located and held for a limited period for purposes of exploration and development. On the whole, the new mining policy seems to have been carefully studied, with a view of incorporating in it the best results of the wisdom and experience of other countries, as embodied in their legislation, as well as those derived from the workings of previous regulations in the Province itself. The sanguine hopes which are entertained for the future prosperity of Ontario rest largely upon its vast stores of mineral wealth, as yet undeveloped, and it is highly desirable that the best efforts of the members of both parties in the House should be given to the perfection of such a policy as may lead to the speedy exploitation of these buried treasures.

EVERY general election, whether Dominion or Provincial, makes it painfully evident that the existing laws for the prevention of bribery and other corrupt practices at elections have proved seriously inadequate. In fact there is but too much reason to fear that the state of affairs in this respect is growing worse rather than better. If the statements that have from time to time been made by the newspapers of both parties may be relied on to any extent whatever, there is serious danger that the public may eventually yield either to indifference or to despair, and come to accept as a matter of course practices which are not only deeply disgraceful to us as a people, but which, if persisted in, must eventually sap and destroy the foundations of upright national character. However impossible it may be to wholly eradicate the evil by Acts of Parliament, without the hearty and impartial co-operation of the political leaders, it is still clearly the duty of our legislators to do their utmost to brand and punish the buying and selling of votes as one of the basest of political crimes. This can be done only by treating those who are guilty of such practices as criminals, and punishing them accordingly. We have often insisted that nothing short of this will deter the dishonest party canvasser or educate the conscience of the corruptible citizen. So long as the culprit is punished merely by fine, or permitted to go scot free, so long will the degrading practices continue. The Ontario law seems specially faulty in the respects indicated, and we are glad to learn that Mr. Whitney has for the third time introduced his simple but effective Bill in the Assembly. The amendments proposed in this Bill are so fair and reasonable that it is not easy to see on what ground a Government which claims to be honest can refuse to accept the substance of the changes for which it asks. Mr. Whitney's Bill provides that for each of the offences of bribing an elector, accepting a bribe, using undue influence, personating a voter, and voting more than once at an election, which are now punishable by the imposition of a penalty of \$200, there shall also be imposed a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months. Another much needed and invaluable provision, if the law is to be honestly enforced, is that which makes it the duty of the County Attorney to attend the trial of any election petition in his

electoral district, and institute and conduct prosecutions for the violation of the Act, in cases brought to his notice by the Judge at such trial and in other cases which may come under his notice. These simple and reasonable reforms would evidently remove the two chief sources of weakness in the existing measure, viz., the absence of adequate punishment and of adequate provision for its uniform infliction. In imposing a term of imprisonment in default of the payment of the penalty imposed, the present law discriminates most illogically and unfairly against the poor man, while by leaving prosecution itself optional it greatly weakens the moral force of the Act. The amendments proposed in Mr. Whitney's Bill will make the Ontario law practically identical, in respect to the matters involved, with that of England and the Dominion. We should be glad to see the valuable feature of the English law which limits the candidate's expenditures and requires a strict account of them, incorporated in the amending Bill. But if the Government is really sincere in wishing to prevent bribery at elections we do not see on what ground it can object to Mr. Whitney's Bill as it stands.

THE indications are that within the next few months the Election Courts of the Provinces and of the Dominion will be occupied in investigating an unusually large number of cases of alleged corruption and fraud, arising out of the recent elections. Many are no doubt contemplating the prospect with dismay. This may be the case even with some of the candidates on either side, who were themselves not only free from fault personally, but sincerely desirous that the contest should be honestly waged by their supporters. There is undoubtedly an element of hardship in the cases, probably not infrequent, in which such members find their seats jeopardized, and perhaps forfeited, through the act of some less scrupulous agent. Nevertheless it is, we maintain, most desirable in the interest of the country and of electoral purity that in every case in which reasonable evidence of illegal and dishonourable practices is forthcoming, a protest should be entered and the facts thoroughly sifted in the courts, let who may suffer in consequence. By this means only can the Acts designed to prevent corrupt practices be prevented from becoming a dead letter, and the corruptionists from having full swing. As we have argued in another paragraph, it is very desirable as a means of raising political standards and educating the electorate, that the full penalty of the law should be inflicted upon both the guilty parties in every case in which a corrupt bargain is proved to have been made. It is to be hoped, too, that public opinion will frown down every attempt at compromise between the two political parties. To compound a political felony is no less dishonourable and should be deemed no less criminal than to commit the same offence in regard to any other fraudulent transaction. Every such arrangement should be regarded as an admission of guilt on both sides. In this connection attention is naturally directed to accusations of grave irregularities, and even of presumable frauds, which have been made in the Ontario Legislature against certain of the Deputy Returning Officers in the late Provincial Elections. There must be a serious defect in the law if, as seems to be the fact, the candidates, against whom such fraudulent tactics were used, are debarred by the fact of their election from seeking redress in the courts. Those friends of Mr. Mowat, who prize honesty above party, must have been somewhat disappointed by the tone and attitude of certain members of the Government in regard to these charges. The party could have lost nothing, and would have gained much, had these Ministers displayed a greater anxiety to have the cases in question thoroughly investigated before the proper tribunal. It may still be hoped that the Government and the party majority will do themselves honour by affording every facility for such investigation. Justice to the accused as well as to the accusers demands nothing less.

THE reasons given by the Minister of Justice in support of his recommendation that the Manitoba Companies Bill should be disallowed are not only cogent but unanswerable. It is clear that had the Government failed to act on the recommendation it would have been recreant to its duty, both to the corporations affected and to the whole Dominion. As the Government, representing the people of Canada, still retains and must of necessity retain for many years to come a large interest in the ungranted lands of the Province, it was impossible that Provincial legislation adapted to reduce very materially the value of

these lands could have been permitted. It is equally evident that to have permitted such legislation, impairing as it would have done by the imposition of narrow time-limits, and other injurious conditions, the titles of the railway and other corporations to the lands conveyed to them by the Dominion Government, would have been tantamount to a serious breach of the public faith. It is, in fact, hardly conceivable that the Manitoba Legislature could have seriously expected that the Act in question would be permitted to stand. It seems more reasonable to suppose that it was proposed and passed rather as a protest against a state of things which is obnoxious and must become every year more and more obnoxious to the people of the Province. Perhaps, also, it was intended as a notice that a determined struggle is to be entered upon, with a view to curtailing the very extensive powers and privileges that have been granted to these companies by the Dominion Parliament. There is much reason to fear that the holding of these immense tracts of land by non-resident proprietors may prove, at no distant day, a veritable apple of discord. There is, no doubt, room for serious question as to the wisdom of the original policy under which portions of the public domain so large and valuable were alienated from the Province and given over to the Hudson Bay, the Canadian Pacific and various other corporations, which are beyond the jurisdiction and control of the Provincial Authorities. But there can be no question as to the obligation of the Dominion to keep inviolate the public faith in regard to all such transactions. The day may come when all concerned will find it to their mutual advantage to make some compromise or accept some modification of the original agreements. Meanwhile, the Dominion Government can honourably do nothing less than maintain intact the rights of property conferred by public charter upon the various companies against whose possessions the vetoed Act was directed.

NEWFOUNDLAND is, it appears, to have a patient hearing and every facility for presenting its case before the British Cabinet. It is to be hoped that as a result wiser counsels may prevail with its Government and Legislature. With every sympathy for the unfortunate position in which the colony finds itself placed, it is difficult to understand what its representatives can hope to accomplish by the course they are taking. They must admit that the French have some rights in respect to the fisheries on their shores, and that the honour and faith of the Mother Country are involved in observing these rights, even were she in a position to risk all the consequences of ignoring or denying them. It is very likely that the Islanders honestly believe that the treaty confers no such privileges in regard to the lobster fishery as are insisted on by the French, but there surely can be no better way of settling that question than by the proposed arbitration. The obstinacy of the French in refusing all offers of compromise in the matter, or to sell or exchange their treaty privileges, is no doubt exasperating, but the British Government has no right to coerce the French Government in the matter, even were it an easy thing to do. The Newfoundlanders no doubt realize that the British occupancy of Egypt is at the bottom of the French stubbornness, but they can hardly expect that all matters of Imperial concern shall be made subservient to the carrying out of their wishes. The colonial relation has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. It is encouraging and suggestive that the people on the coast whose rights are most seriously affected are said to be more reasonable than the people in other localities whose interests are only indirectly involved. The exasperation of the Newfoundland Government against Canada is more easily understood, and we dare say that, were the situations reversed, we should feel equally resentful of what might seem, in that case, an unwarranted interference with our rights. Should recent reports, which represent the draft treaty arranged with Mr. Blaine by Mr. Bond as wholly one-sided and unfair to the Islanders prove true, it is likely that the Government will soon repent of its harsh treatment of our fishermen. It is to be hoped that it may do so without pressure from England, as that would no doubt still further incense the Islanders. The theory that one colony is in any wise bound to consider the welfare of another in treating with foreign powers would be hard to maintain on abstract principles, and yet the present instance seems to show that the opposite view would lead to serious difficulties, not to say absurdities in practice, as the people of Newfoundland might themselves be the first to discover on some other occasion.