

based on the curious expectation that it will be enforced by persons who have just broken it.

The present writer, when acting as official stenographer about sixteen years ago, attended a large number of trials in connection with election petitions and gradually became convinced that the great defect in the law was in affording so many opportunities to prevent instead of to aid a full investigation, and soon afterwards he called public attention to it in articles published in some of the daily newspapers. Referring to the defect in question as it then appeared to him, he wrote as follows:—

“One of the weaknesses of the present law is that after an election petition has been presented containing a large number of allegations of flagrant violations of the law, the respondent may avoid a full investigation by a simple admission that a technical violation of the law has been committed and upon such admission the respondent is unseated and the whole proceedings are forthwith terminated, and, as a result of this ‘investigation’ thus legally stifled, the corrupt practices of the voters escape exposure and punishment. How can voters be expected to fear laws against bribery when investigation and punishment for their violation can be so easily avoided? One of the primary objects of the law was that corrupt practices at elections should be fully investigated and punished, but by this easy method of terminating the whole proceedings a capital illustration is given of ‘how *not* to do it.’ Parliament should remedy this defect and should prevent the making of any arrangement between parties by which in consideration of the petition against Mr. Blank, M.P., being ‘dropped’ the petition against Mr. Dash, M.P., who is on the other side of politics, would also be abandoned. This practice of trading off petitions is a most reprehensible one. The power to stop a judicial investigation involving serious charges against many voters should not be in the hands of the wire-pullers of any political party.”

In 1897 the writer repeated this statement in a public criticism of the law.

Although various amendments have been made to the law since that time there has been no remedy for the defect thus