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lion dollars—a sum fully equal to the public revenue of the whole Dominion for a year and a half ; and the people—the House of Commons—were thus left without a voice as to the route which the railway should take, or even the most general details of its construction. In the second place, members of the cabinet confessed to having accepted for electioneering purposes a sum—which in Canada must be accounted very large—from the gentleman who had been promised, or at least expected, the contract for the Pacific Railway, and who has declared that it was no political conviction, but simply the spirit of commercial speculation, that induced him to advance so much money for the purpose of keeping the Government in power. It was a further serious aspect of this political scandal that the Government made an extremely questionable use of its prerogative, and showed a somewhat unseemly contempt of the privileges of parliament, in order to prevent the House of Commons from itself carrying out the investigation on which it had determined.

It was no wonder, therefore, that when at last the ministry met the House, they found the opposition vastly increased in strength, and, after a lengthened debate, resigned without waiting for a division. The new ministry, soon after its formation, dissolved the House, and the appeal to the electors showed that they were sustained by a very powerful element throughout the country. Whether they will retain that support for any

length of time, is a question on which, as on other social subjects, it is hazardous to form predictions ; but it is a question which is of interest only in so far as the ministry realize the mission which they have undertaken, and to which they owe their position—of fighting the battle of constitutional government in Canada. Certainly nothing has happened which should make the country forget the serious faults of the previous administration ; but the temper of political discussion, both in the House of Commons at Ottawa and throughout the Dominion, gives too great reason to fear that politicians are settling again into two factions, separated by no principle except the common conviction of the desirability of being in office. However convenient this state of things may be for the professional politician, it is a result which can be contemplated only with the deepest concern by every earnest student of political affairs. Not only would such a result defeat one great end of the Canadian confederation, but it would give a new force to one of the great perils of popular government. Let us hope that the premier of the Dominion and his associates may prove themselves equal to their mission, and that they may find some safeguard for constitutional freedom against that despotism of party which has formed one of its most powerful foes at all times, and now forms its peculiar foe on the other side of the Atlantic.—*British Quarterly Review*.

April 1878