

law practically inoperative against bribery, and by the appointment of returning-officers unscrupulously obsequious to the interests of the party by whom they are appointed. Now, no one who watched impartially the elections for the second parliament of the Dominion could avoid the conviction that the Government had been using their power in all those ways to secure a verdict in their favor at the polls. The elections were brought on in an order which was wholly inexplicable except in the interest of the ministry. Votes were obtained from men whose employment in the service of the nation ought to keep them aloof from the service of a party. In more than one instance a returning-officer sent in a return so manifestly in opposition to the facts, that the Government, out of self-respect, should have at once subjected the offender to criminal prosecution.

But it was mainly by their conduct in reference to the laws against bribery, and by the advantage which they took of the laxity of these laws, that the ministry brought upon themselves their defeat. It had been well enough known to every one in Canada for a long time that representative government was being rendered a laughing-stock by the extent to which bribery was being carried on by all parties. All the evidence on the subject shows that neither party throughout the country could boast of superior freedom from this corruption. Only this can be said of the leaders in the opposition at the time, that they demanded the legislation which has since been obtained, and which has proved a very formidable impediment to bribery and other dishonorable influences at elections. The Government, however, by its overpowering majority in parliament, crushed all attempts at legislation in this direction, and the result was that the second election for the Dominion House of Commons was disgraced by an extensive system of bribery, in which, according to their own confession, the leaders of the Government were deeply involved.

The sources from which the Government obtained funds for bribery were various; but after every allowance for disinterested subscriptions from conscientious supporters, there remain enormous sums, which no statesman should ever have allowed himself to touch, or,

if tempted to use, could ever have spoken of afterwards without a feeling of shame. There was even a prevalent suspicion that the public money was being misdirected to electioneering purposes; and though it may be admitted that the suspicion was founded on a mistake, it must also be borne in mind that the premier was himself entirely to blame for giving currency to the suspicion. A motion had been introduced into the House of Commons at Ottawa for a confidential audit of the expenditure on the Secret Service Fund, and the motion was defended by a reference to British practice. The Government, however, succeeded in defeating the motion, and Sir John Macdonald, in vindicating afterwards his opposition to the motion, not content with denying that the demand for a confidential audit was justified by British usage, made the astounding assertion that, if a cabinet in England went out of office with £100,000 of secret service money to their credit, they could employ it in carrying the elections against their opponents. It is somewhat surprising that this statement did not attract attention or call forth any protest from the English press at the time, and that it was only after some years that Sir John Macdonald acknowledged his misapprehension about the practice of British statesmen in reference to the use of Secret Service Funds.

But however well or ill founded may have been the suspicion that the Dominion Government were abusing the public money for party purposes, their own confession places beyond all controversy the notorious attempt to maintain their position by corrupt influences in connection with the projected Pacific Railway through Canadian territory. This scandal received such prominent notice in the English press at the time, and is still so recent, that it is unnecessary to revive its details at present. One or two points of special political importance are all that require to be remembered.

In the first place, the Pacific Railway Bill contained in an aggravated form those unconstitutional features which have been already pointed out in the earlier railway bill of the administration in Ontario. It handed over absolutely to the Government, along with fifty million acres of land, the sum of thirty mil-

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