

How Not To
Do It.

The voiding of the Kingston election for the Ontario Legislature affords a fresh and striking illustration of the farcical character of much of our legal and judicial pretence at putting down bribery and corruption in elections. It is clear that the purchase of votes does not really count as a crime, else it could not be condoned by an agreement between prosecuting and defending attorneys. If some one were on trial before the court for burglary, what would be thought of the Justice who would accept an agreement between the opposing counsel, and permit the prisoner to go scott free on the ground of the great expense that would be incurred were the trial to go on? Can any intelligent citizen believe that the man who buys or sells votes, or, to put it a little more strongly, the man who debauches voters by the score or the hundred, commits a lesser crime against the community and the State than the man who robs citizens of some of their personal property? We do not now stop to inquire where the chief fault lies, whether in the law, or in those who are charged with its administration, though we have no doubt that the defect is partly in the law itself. Even the Ontario Government, which is probably as nearly pure and upright as any Government now in power in Canada, is evidently not in downright earnest in its efforts to stamp out corruption. We believe it demonstrable that when it caused the existing statute for the prevention of corrupt practices at elections to be so modified that no effect should result, nobody be punished, no matter how clear the proof of bribery, unless it could be shown that the number of votes so purchased was conceivably sufficient to have changed the result of the election, it took a backward step which has done much to render all its legislation for the prevention of bribery useless for any purpose save the occasional avoidance of an election. The logical inference is that what the legislators aimed at was, not the stamping out of illegal and base practices, but simply the protection of members against the possible loss of seats, in cases in which, though their agents may have purchased votes, it cannot be proved that their success was gained by such purchase. The simple fact is that electoral corruption is the bane of our national existence. It is sapping the very foundation of all that is honourable and virtuous in our political life. And yet we care so little about the thing itself that when it is admitted that gross bribery has prevailed in a given case, our virtuous Government and its Legislators and Judiciary, deem it enough to say, "Let the candidates fight the battle again. We cannot afford to find out and punish the guilty." What is the natural inference from such a course in regard to bribery itself? Is it not that the only wrong consists in being found out?

The Coming of Mr.
Mansergh

Through the wise action of the Toronto City Council, Mr. Mansergh is, it is understood, now on his way to Canada, to give Toronto the benefit of his scientific and expert skill on the water question. Let us hope that this is the beginning of the much desired end, the settlement for a half century at least of this troublesome question. The end is worth the fee, which is certainly liberal according to Canadian standards, if only for the sake of giving the citizens rest in regard to this matter. It would be a great boon to be able to feel a few weeks hence, as we may now hope to do, that a final conclusion has been reached, and that the ghost of the disturbing water-works problem is not likely to rise again for a generation or two in the shape of a floating steel conduit, or in any other. It is quite conceivable that there may be half-a-dozen ways by which the end could be attained, possibly without much to choose between them, and it is very certain that any one

effective way will be expensive. We can never know that the method which shall at last be agreed upon is positively the only or even the very best means for overcoming the difficulty. But if we are ever to dispel the uncertainty which is doing injury every day to the city, and to enjoy the luxury, than which there is scarcely a greater, of a bountiful supply of cool, pure water in every home, we must make up our minds, once for all, and set resolutely about the permanent work. This is what we understand to be meant by the bringing of Mr. Mansergh across the ocean, and we know no better step that could have been taken to accomplish the end. Thousands of busy housewives who now wait long and anxiously for the appearance of the precious water-cart, from which they are permitted to take only one poor pitcherfull for their kettles, and thousands of labourers who go about their work with parched lips because the water-jug is empty, will pray that the decision may be prompt and the execution energetic.

The Postal Telegraph
System.

The success of the change which was adopted many years ago in England, by which the telegraph was made a part of the postal system, has naturally attracted attention in the United States, and its adoption there is being urged by some influential persons, and is probably only a question of time. In the August number of the *Arena*, Judge Walter Clark, of the North Carolina Supreme Court, has an article strenuously advocating the change. Some of the facts presented in the article are interesting and impressive. The writer claims that the adoption of the postal-telegraph system in England would result in the following advantages:—

"(1) A uniform rate of ten cents for ten words, between all points, or possibly less; (2) an increase in individual messages of at least ten for every one now sent; (3) an increase in despatches of thirty words or more for every one now sent; (4) a popularization of the telegraph for all uses, social or business; (5) an increase in the promptness of delivery, the average there being now seven to nine minutes as against two to three hours formerly; (6) no section would be destitute, but at each one of our seventy thousand post-offices there would be a telephone or a telegraph. By adopting the telephone at most post-offices, instead of the telegraph, the increase in the number of post-office employees would be inconsiderable."

Comparing the present uses of the telegraph to the nation, with those which would result from the proposed change, Judge Clark makes some striking statements and comparisons:—

"At present, owing to high rates, forty-six per cent. of all telegrams in this country are sent by speculators (who thus get an advantage over producers) and only eight per cent. are social or ordinary business messages. In Belgium, where the government rate is less than one cent per message, the social and ordinary business messages between man and man are sixty-three per cent. of the whole. . . . With the telegraphs and telephones operated by our post-office department at moderate rates, say five or even ten cents per message, a similar change would take place here. Individual and news messages would increase tenfold to thirtyfold, as elsewhere—probably more—and the monopoly now held by speculators would cease."

Costs of Private and
of Government
Telegraphing.

Judge Clark's argument for the adoption of the Postal-Telegraph system is largely one of "facts and figures." Following up the weighty statements quoted in the preceding paragraph, he makes the following startling comparison of the cost of sending telegraphic messages under the present system, with those which he estimates would be incurred were the lines under Government management.

"The average telegraph rate now charged in this country, by the reports to Congress, is thirty-one cents per mes-