

named; and I have the gratification of knowing that you will thus be restored all the sooner to those important private occupations which, I feel assured, must suffer seriously by your prolonged attendance here. You will, of course, draw still the usual sessional allowance.

It was, therefore, no mere cry of a faction which the opposition raised, when they appealed to the electors of Ontario against the policy of the Government, and their appeal was evidently sustained by the voice of the electors at the polls. Feeling confident in the result of the elections, the opposition determined to put the Government on its trial at the very opening of the new legislative assembly. When the address was moved, they proposed an amendment condemning the policy of the ministry in reference to the railway grant, and the amendment was carried by a small majority. The ministry pretended to treat the vote as not implying want of confidence; but an additional vote, with an overwhelming majority, compelled them to abandon the treasury benches with some loss of dignity at last.

The course of political affairs in the Province of Ontario was but an inner circle of the wider course taken by the politics of the Dominion. Here the opposition was led by the present prime minister, the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie. For the first two or three years its feebleness obliged it to content itself with aimless criticism of isolated measures; but by-and-by the ministry began to indicate a policy similar to that which had called forth a victorious opposition in Ontario. It has been observed above that the fundamental safeguard of all constitutional government is that the executive shall be held under as minute and incessant control as the public service will allow, and that the one foe of all constitutional government is the political adventurer who endeavors to hold himself above such control. Legislation may of course render the ambition of such adventurers more difficult, but every system of government is exposed to peril from the unscrupulousness of the men by whom it may be administered. The circumstances of Canada, as of all new countries, form a peculiar source of temptation to corruption in the administration of her Government. From the very nature of the case, a new country

cannot possess that leisurely class of men from whom England has long derived her noblest statesmen, and from all that we have observed there seems no immediate prospect of this deficiency being made up in Canada. At least not a few instances have been brought to notice in which the sons of wealthy Canadian merchants have been allowed to content themselves with a disgracefully meagre education, and have squandered, in frivolous idleness or in coarse sensuality, the fortunes which had been laboriously accumulated by industrious parents; while no instance has yet attracted attention in which the leisure derived from hereditary wealth has been devoted to the service of the public in political life. The result of all this is that the administration of public affairs necessarily falls very largely into the hands of professional politicians—of men who enter politics as they would enter any other profession from which they seek to obtain a living. It is no discredit to Canadians in particular, but to human nature in general, to say that only the most incorruptible of men can utterly withstand the temptations of such a profession. At least the sympathy of every earnest political thinker must be repelled by any policy which would render it easier for the professional politician to yield to the temptations of his position.

It was, as we have said, a policy in this direction—a policy of encouragement to the mere political adventurer—that strengthened the opposition to the first Government of the Dominion, and a brief reference to the main points of conflict between the Government and their opponents will suffice to make this evident.

One of the most serious dangers to constitutional government is the power which a cabinet possesses of manipulating the elections so as to put the opposition at a disadvantage throughout the country. This may be done, for example, by spreading the elections over some weeks, taking care to secure the large number of voters who go for the winning side by obtaining at an early date the decision of those constituencies in which the ministry expect a favorable return. The same end is also attained by bringing to the polls the large army of civil servants throughout the country, by leaving the