

have arrived, the country may think better of it, and begin to cut its coat more in accordance with its cloth.

The present Parliament has, even at this early period in its history, shown itself greatly superior to its predecessor in its liberal tendencies. Electoral and constitutional reform in one shape or another has been before it since the very beginning of the session, and the House of Commons has committed itself to the principle of more than one very important measure. It may be found impracticable to push these through all their stages during the present session; but an election law providing simultaneous polling and voting by ballot, together with a reasonably low property qualification, must at no distant day find a place on the statute book. It is a little singular to see a resolution against the use of the ballot carried in the Nova Scotia Legislature, when the principle of secret voting is making such rapid strides on almost every side. It seems not improbable, however, that this somewhat sudden action will yet be reversed, and the system get the benefit of a fairer trial than it has had during the short time it has been in operation. It may be taken for granted that a controverted Elections Act will also be passed, handing the trial of contested elections over to the Judges of the Superior Courts. Theoretically, Parliament ought to be the best and only judge of the right of any member to retain his seat; but it has been found highly expedient and almost requisite to delegate the exercise of this privilege to some less cumbrous and partizan, and at the same time more expeditious tribunal than even a committee of members. The House of Commons has, by a large majority, agreed to do away with dual representation. Whether desirable or not *per se* such a step was rendered inevitable by the action of several of the Provinces which have declared against it. But there can be little doubt that some confusion will be avoided, and some security against the introduction of Federal influence in the local Legislatures gained by making the principal general over the whole Dominion. The House of Commons, after exculpating the returning officer of Muskoka, who made a special return, declaring neither candidate elected, wisely passed a resolution instructing returning officers to consider their office in future as a ministerial and not a judicial one. According to the vast preponderance of Canadian precedents it has always been so regarded, and it would be perfectly intolerable and highly dangerous to make it anything else. Henceforth, let us hope, the Judges will decide all matters of controversy, and neither the returning officer nor the House of Commons will be in a position to wield to the advantage of either candidate a power which is so liable to be employed for partizan purposes.