

countries. We are not sent here *day by day* to represent the ideas of our constituents. Their local rights, their municipal privileges we are bound to protect; their general interests we are bound to consult at all times, but not their will, unless it shall coincide with our own deliberate sense of right." More explicit still, if possible, is the following declaration of the same speaker: "We are not sent here for the particular spot we represent, but to consider the affairs of the country and the good of the church. When a member is returned to this House he ceases to be responsible to his constituency. It is at the end of the period for which he has to serve them in Parliament that he again comes before them and it is then only that he is accountable to them." We may come forward another generation still, to the date of the publication of Mr. Mill's "Representative Government," and find the same principle not yet extinct. "A man of conscience and known ability," says that philosopher, "should insist on full freedom to act as he, in his own judgment, deems best, and should not consent to act on any other terms." Since that time the doctrine in question has been less and less heard of; and to-day the "delegate" theory of parliamentary representation may be said to be thoroughly established. Where could we find a constituency in Canada that would elect either Burke or John Stuart Mill on the conditions they lay down? If one is to be found, I should be disposed to look for it in the Province of Quebec, where the voters have not yet been educated into jealousy of superior talents, or into distrust of wider views.

The effect of the change has undoubtedly been to impair the character of modern parliaments considered as deliberative bodies, as well as their ability to deal with great measures. There can be no true deliberation without a certain amount of openness to conviction. As things are to-day each member feels bound to carry out the understanding he had with his electors and support the party he undertook to support. An atrophy of the deliberative function of representative bodies has thus set in. How far it will proceed, and what modern parliaments will be reduced to, remains to be seen. How a political structure intended to have a distinct use of its own may undergo complete atrophy we may observe in the case of the college of so-called Presidential Electors in the United States. According to the Constitution these electors were to exercise a real choice of their own; but to-day, and indeed for long since, the college has dwindled into a purely formal device for registering the popular vote. Much is heard nowadays of the machine in politics. It is not much praised in public, though I believe it is sometimes "hugged" in private. Delicacy would of course prescribe privacy for so affectionate an operation. An enterprising newspaper was proposing some time ago to "smash the machine," and, if there were two—of which there was more than a suspicion—to "smash them both." How it was going to be done was not explained, nor who was to be the smasher; and, so far as I can learn, the feat has not yet been accomplished. The fact is that the machine is an absolutely necessary accompaniment of universal suffrage in the present condition of society. It is a kind of primary