

need of reform, unaccompanied by an indication of the nature of the reform he would favour, it can, on the other hand, scarcely fail to be weakened by the differences of opinion on the same point known to exist among the members of the Government themselves. On the whole, while it is morally certain that the dissolution cannot be much longer delayed, it has seldom, perhaps never, been more difficult to find reliable grounds on which to base a prophecy as to the result of the coming election.

**The Copyright Question.**

Mr. Arnold Foster, M.P., takes exception to Lord Ripon's remark to the effect that his sympathies are naturally with the colonies which he represents. This raises a question with regard to the proper mental attitude of the Colonial Secretary in the British Cabinet, which we are not wise enough to discuss. Mr. Foster says: "If a Secretary of State appears in the Cabinet as an avowed advocate, prejudiced in behalf of his Canadian clients, it seems high time that British authors and publishers find some other channel to convey their views." We cannot even guess what may be the alternative hinted at in this remark. A Canadian naturally wonders whether, if the Colonial Secretary may not be expected or permitted to look on questions in controversy from the point of view of colonists and to present their case sympathetically to his colleagues in the Cabinet, there is any other way in which Colonial legislators can get an assurance of a fair hearing before that august body. Touching the case in point, it seems to us that two distinct questions are involved. The first and chief is that of Canada's right to legislate upon the question of copyright. The other, that of the merits or demerits of the particular piece of legislation, is only incidental and secondary. Of course, as we have before said, the necessity of Imperial assent in order to the validity of any act passed by the Canadian Parliament implies the right of the Imperial authorities to withhold that assent. But this can be warranted only on very strong grounds, unless our prized self-government is to be reduced to lilliputian dimensions. Our copyright laws may affect injuriously the property of certain persons in England, but so also may our tariff laws. If the British authors and publishers would refrain from sacrificing the interests of Canadian, to those of United States, publishers, the necessity for special legislation would be removed. Failing that, we do not see why the Canadian Government would not be justifiable in insisting that nothing short of clear conflict with Imperial as distinct from individual interests could afford sufficient ground for refusal to ratify Colonial legislation.

**The Civic Investigation.**

Judge McDougall's Court of Inquiry, at the date of this writing, is still in session and is likely to continue its investigations for some time to come. We can only conjecture, from the dark hints of the prosecuting counsel, what further revelations may be in store. But without touching on any matter which is yet *sub judice*, we may safely comment on certain facts which are already established beyond reasonable doubt. One of these facts is that a larger or smaller number of the men whom the citizens of Toronto have placed in positions of the highest trust which is in the gift of the citizens, have basely betrayed that trust. The second is that, of the men who have up to this date been placed on the witness stand, all of them men of some position and standing in the community, several must have been guilty not merely of shameful prevarication and evasion while on oath, but even of downright, unblushing perjury. Pending the conclusion of the investigation, or the higher one which it is to be hoped, in the interest of

municipal honesty, will follow, it can hardly be determined who are the guilty individuals. But when two individuals testify to statements which are in downright contradiction to each other, a child must see that one or the other must be guilty of false-swearing. These facts are most humiliating to all respectable citizens. Save, perhaps, deliberate assassination, and one or two other of the most shocking crimes, it is doubtful whether there are in the whole catalogue any much more vile or base than the two under discussion, betrayal of trust for paltry personal gain, and brazen-faced perjury in the witness box. The man who is chosen for and accepts an office of trust, public or private, is placed in a position which appeals to a genuine sense of honour in the strongest possible way. If he fails to respond to that trust and shows himself ready to sell for gain the interests of those who have thus honoured and trusted him, it can only be because the sense of honour is lamentably feeble or altogether lacking in his nature. So too, by general consent, there is scarcely a baser, more cowardly, or more degrading vice than falsehood. The man who is guilty of the one or the other thereby brands himself as utterly unworthy to receive any gift or confidence which the public may have to bestow. It is also imperatively necessary, in the interests and for the safety of all concerned, that the persons shown to be guilty of either offence should be punished with the full rigour of the law, as a terror to evil-doers. Another result may surely be hoped for. No one doubts that there are hundreds of capable men, well known in the city, whose trustworthiness and truthfulness are absolutely above suspicion. Surely the rate-payers of the city will see to it that only persons of this class shall hereafter be elected to any municipal office. But a great change will have to come over the rate-payers. They can elect good men if they wish to do so. The trouble is that very few save those immediately and pecuniarily concerned care a fig who get into the City Council. The root of the whole matter is the selfish indifference of the rate-payers.

**The Detectives and Clara Ford.**

The detective system is an evil. We must, we suppose, however reluctantly, admit that, within certain limits and subject to certain restrictions, it is a necessary evil. The evidence given by certain members of the Toronto detective force, in the recent preliminary examination of Clara Ford, forces upon the mind certain questions which demand careful consideration, with regard to the nature and extent of those limits and restrictions. It will be remembered that the evidence which determined and justified the police magistrate in committing the unhappy woman for trial was mainly that of the detectives who made the arrest, and to whom she, after repeated denials of her guilt, finally made a full and detailed confession of guilt. It is true that the evidence affirmed that the detectives, before receiving the confession, had distinctly and repeatedly warned the prisoner that any statement she might make might be used against her in court. Nevertheless the narrative made it pretty clear that they had previously woven around her a web of circumstantial evidence, which, aided by the proof of certain inconsistencies in her own statements, had evidently led her to despair of any possibility of escape.

**Who Should Hear a Confession.**

The question is—and it cannot be doubted that it is a question of far-reaching importance in connection with the administration of criminal justice—Are policeman and detectives, or other executive officers, justifiable, under any circumstances, we will not say in seeking to extort, but in listening to and taking down for further use, such a confession of guilt on