

which had to be undertaken by the very terms of the confederation. It is not necessary to explain how favors can be shown to contractors which will call forth their energies when the existence of a Government is imperilled, and open their purses when an electioneering fund is getting exhausted. The hordes of men also employed by large Government contractors can easily be made to feel an interest in the party through whom they have obtained their immediate occupation. But an attempt at corruption of a somewhat novel character was made, especially in the Province of Ontario, by the bribery of entire localities. In the location of national institutions the Government of this province gave it to be understood by unmistakable actions, and even by unmistakable language, that they were guided not so much by a regard for the interests of the people at large as by the intention of rewarding those constituencies which had sent representatives to the right side of the House. This policy culminated in a measure which the Government used its majority to carry in the legislative assembly on the eve of the second provincial election. By this measure one and a half million of dollars were placed absolutely at the disposal of the Government, with the single restriction that it was to be distributed in bonuses to projected railways in different parts of the province.

On several occasions previously the Government had, not without strenuous opposition, obtained smaller grants for various works, without any specifications, and therefore without any reliable estimates. In the case of the large railway grant, though the sum formed part of an accumulated surplus in the provincial treasury, the English reader ought to bear in mind that it represented nearly the whole annual revenue of the province at the time; and this sum was handed over to the Government without any specification as to the particular projects which were to be assisted, and without the roughest estimate of the amount which each might require. In view of the principles by which the Government had given it to be understood that they were guided in the expenditure of public money on different localities, and in view of the fact that nearly every county had some pet railway project on hand at

the time, it would not have been surprising if the Government bait had caught every constituency in the province. It is to the credit of the political sentiment of Ontario that the people refused the bait. The opposition had all along protested against the Government asking for large sums while they refused to give the House specific information as to the nature and locality and estimated cost of the works on which the sums were to be expended. It was on this point specially, and with more prominent reference to the large railway grant, that the opposition met the ministerial party at the polls in 1871. We believe that the more dispassionately this crisis comes to be estimated, the more it will be recognized that the very principle of constitutional government was at stake in the election. No plea can be advanced in defence of the ministerial policy which would not equally have justified the ministry in asking for a vote of the entire revenue for each year in a lump sum, without laying any estimates before the House. It has long been a familiar common-place in the politics of constitutional countries, that the legislative body, which represents the people, must be satisfied as to the necessity and expediency of all expenditure in the public service before voting the requisite grants, and that this principle forms the one effective check which the people hold over the men who control the machinery of government. Without this check, the forms of representative government might be relegated among the solemn farces which still impart the dignity of a hollow stateliness to many departments of human action. An administration therefore which acts on the principle of demanding enormous sums, while retaining to itself the unchecked control of their expenditure in detail, is on the fair way to meet the House some day with a preposterous speech from the throne:—

Gentlemen, my ministers have formed careful estimates of the amounts which will be required for their respective departments, and from these estimates I find that the total amount demanded by the exigencies of the public service will be so many millions. It is evidently for the interests of the country that the public service should not be interfered with by men who have not the special acquaintance that my ministers possess with its requirements. I shall therefore simply ask you to vote the total sum which I have

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