

pant in the offence, and who did his utmost to baffle justice. The prerogatives of the Governor-General were used in the interest of the incriminated Ministers to prorogue Parliament and hand over the inquiry to a Commission appointed by the Ministers themselves. At last the country being roused, the Ministry fell. The Opposition took their places and at once dropped the inquiry, so that no verdict was ever pronounced, and the net result was the transfer of office from one set of competitors to another. In ordinary trials it would be deemed a snare to the feet of justice if jurymen had a strong personal interest in the result. Everybody knows that a party majority would find Abel guilty and acquit Cain. Either by delegation to the judges, as in the case of contested elections, or in some other way an impartial tribunal must be provided, if the nation desires to overawe guilt, and at the same time to protect honour; for the looseness of the present system exposes honour to reckless imputation almost as much as it shields guilt. A single trial conducted with dignity by an upright and inflexible tribunal would at once impress upon the minds of public men, as nothing else can, that corruption is not a peccadillo but a crime.

Another serious defect in the Constitution is the want of a power of amendment. The Imperial Parliament, of course, can amend the British North America Act; but, we repeat, the Imperial Parliament, with business of its own which trenches deeply on the grouse season, has no time or thought to spare for the politics of Canada. It might delegate its powers for the purpose, reserving to itself a veto to be exercised within a given time, as when Executive Commissions are empowered to frame ordinances which are afterwards laid on the tables of the two Houses, and, unless a motion for disapproval is carried, become law. The power of amendment, however, ought to be vested, not in Parliament, but in the sovereign people from whom the Constitution emanates; and the sovereign people ought in the last resort to possess the right not only of approval or disapproval, but of initiation. It is one of the lessons of modern experience that an organized body of politicians, entrenched in an immutable constitution, or a constitution that cannot be changed without their previous assent as holders