

AMENDMENT TO THE LAW REGARDING BRIBERY.

Attention was drawn in these columns (Vol. 42, p. 697) to the desirability of supplementing the laws against bribery by an enactment prohibiting attempts to influence voters by promises or threats regarding the expenditure of public money in any electoral district. We are glad to see that our proposal has at last borne fruit, and that a bill aimed at this extremely mischievous form of corruption has been introduced into the House of Commons. That this measure follows very closely the lines suggested in the article mentioned above is apparent from the following provision:—

“Every person who directly or indirectly, by himself or by any person on his behalf, before or during an election, in order to induce, or in such manner as might induce, any voter or class of voters, or the voters in a particular electoral district, to vote for or against any candidate, or to refrain from voting, by public speaking, by any writing, by any printed publication, or otherwise, offers or promises, or offers or promises to procure or to endeavour to procure, or suggests the probability of the expenditure of the public moneys of Canada, within an electoral district or districts, if and in case, only, such voter or voters procure or assist to procure the return of a particular candidate, or of a candidate, of a particular party, or, who, with the intent or manner aforesaid, threatens or promises to impede, delay, hinder, prevent or diminish such expenditure, is guilty of the indictable offence of bribery, and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, and not less than six months, and shall also forfeit the sum of one thousand dollars to any person who sues therefor, with costs.”

No one, we imagine, will contend that during the year which has elapsed since the publication of our own remarks on the subject the need of a statute of this description has decreased. It is sincerely to be hoped that the proposer, Mr. Alcorn, will succeed in inducing the House to ratify his praiseworthy endeavour to purify politics in this direction.

Those considerations of temporary advantage which will be recognized, though perhaps not openly urged, as reasons for