

fiscal policy was plainly a mere pretext; at that rate, no important measure could be passed without entailing an appeal to constituencies. A good harvest, a surplus revenue, and the sinister advantage possessed by the Government in holding the cornucopia of the North-West, made victory at the moment pretty sure, and the opportunity was seized. Members of a legislature over whose heads a threat of dissolution can be always held, are subject to an influence at least as baneful as any of those against which the Independence of Parliament Act is intended to guard; and the wider the prevalence of corruption, which increases the expense of re-election, the more formidable this engine of coercion will become. The day of meeting should also be fixed, that there may be no more manœuvring with the date, or misuse of the power of prorogation such as took place in 1873. Few people, if they think the change right in itself, will feel any squeamishness about taking away an ostensible prerogative from the Crown. The learned author of *Parliamentary Government in the Colonies* may continue to feed his loyal imagination with the belief that Parliaments still answer to their etymology, and are summoned to "hold high converse" with Governors-General or Lieutenant-Governors respecting affairs of State. But most of us are conscious by this time that in England the Sovereign's name is William Ewart, and that in Canada it is John.

A regular mode of trial for political corruption and other political offences is not provided in the Constitution, and the blank, as Mr. Shields is showing us, requires to be filled. Political offences are as capable of legal definition and of judicial investigation as others, while they are not less dangerous to the state. There is nothing, we presume, in a Colony analogous to the British power of impeachment before the House of Lords; and if there were, no confidence could be placed in such a tribunal as the Senate, which, besides its lack of judicial ability, might be a jury packed by the accused. Parliament, we know, is entitled the Grand Inquest of the Nation. But how does the Grand Inquest of the Nation act? How did it act in the case of the Pacific Scandal? Party framed the indictment; the trial was a faction fight. In the Chair of the Committee of Inquiry sat a partisan who was himself a partici-