

British people for constitutional government, and they were intended to put a check upon the power of the King and of Parliament. They were intended to subject the King to the control of Parliament and to subject Parliament to the final arbitrament of the people. The great and eminent men, wise and prudent, who were then moulding the destinies of our country, recognized the importance of these dispositions by making them fundamental features permanent enactments of our constitution and went so far as to place them beyond the power of the Parliament to repeal, to alter, or to ignore them. By Section 50 of the Constitution they provided that:

Every House of Commons shall continue for five years from the day of the return of the writs for choosing the House (subject to be sooner dissolved by the Governor-General) and no longer.

By Section 20 they provided also as follows:

There shall be a session of the Parliament of Canada once at least in every year, so that twelve months shall not intervene between the last sitting of the Parliament in one session and its first sitting in the next session.

These two provisions are part of our constitutional law, and it is not in the power of this Parliament to ignore, to repeal, or to amend them.

Government Deserves Censure.

The last elections took place in September, 1911; the writs were returned in the following October; therefore this Parliament must cease in the month of October next. The only authority by which these provisions may be altered is vested, not in this Parliament, but in the Imperial Parliament. Such is the law to-day.

Yet, in the face of this imperative disposition, there have been evidences as numerous almost as the days of the year that on the part of the Canadian people there is growing disinclination to have an election during the War. The reason for that view seems to be this: In all things human, even the most excellent, the infirmity of our nature is never completely absent. We prize our system of parliamentary government. We believe that the institutions which we obtained from Great Britain, if not absolutely perfect, are undoubtedly the best and wisest that ever were devised for the government of men; yet they betray the imperfection of our nature. Our own experience has proved that in every election there is some displacement of the public economy of the community; there is an unsettled state of business, more or less pronounced; there is violence to a greater or less degree in the clash of opinions and the clash of parties. And at a time when the energies of the nation should be bent towards one end and one end only, the very thought that there might be an election, with all its concomitant strife and division, was alarming to a large section of the community. This feeling on the part