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## *PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF THE LAWS REGARDING BRIBERY.*

Considering the unusual degree of attention which the subject of electoral corruption is at present exciting throughout the Dominion, it is somewhat surprising that no definite proposition has been put forward, with a view to the suppression of one particular form of that corruption which is not mentioned in any of the existing statutes, but which is admitted to be fully as mischievous and demoralizing as any of the descriptions of bribery which have been specifically prohibited by the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures. Broadly speaking, the effect of the enactments now in force is merely to prosecute certain acts or words which are calculated to influence directly, upon improper grounds, the minds of individual voters, regarded solely as individuals. They cannot, by any permissible straining of their phraseology, be construed as covering cases in which the essence of the corruption consists in bringing an indirect influence to bear upon voters by means of acts or words which relate primarily to the affairs of the entire community of which they are members, and only in a secondary sense, and through the community, to the personal interests of the voters themselves.

The most effective and far-reaching of the methods by which this kind of indirect influence is exercised consists in expending, or promising to expend, or threatening to refrain from expending, the public money for some object in which a community is concerned. One illustration of the exercise of such influence is furnished by the campaign tactics so commonly pursued in regard to various kinds of public works in which the commercial interests of constituencies are involved. That the general popularity which the party controlling the State purse for the time being is certain to acquire by the actual commencement of such a work, or by a promise that it will be commenced in the future,