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WE are glad to stand corrected by the Kingston *Whig* in regard to the punishment provided by the Dominion Act for the receiver of bribes. The action in the Lennox case had escaped our notice or memory. The cases are so very rare in which any serious penalties have been inflicted upon those found guilty of taking bribes that one might almost be justified in looking upon the provisions of the Act in that regard as a dead letter. Until the consequences are made to follow the commission of the crime with much greater certainty and severity than hitherto, the law will not do its perfect work, nor will the offence be regarded in its proper light. It should be made the duty of the courts to impose, as a matter of course, the penalty of fine or imprisonment or both, whenever a case of bribe-taking can be established. Prompt punishment in a few instances would be wondrously effective in opening the eyes of thousands, who have come to regard their votes and influence as legitimate articles of commerce, to the heinousness of their offence against the commonwealth.

THE appointment of a Commission to enquire into the workings of the Municipal system in Ontario should be productive of good results. We do not know that exception can be taken to the *personnel* of the Commission, save on the ground of its partisan complexion. It would have indicated a broader policy, and its recommendations would have been much more likely to command general assent, had both parties been represented in it. The somewhat complicated Municipal system of Ontario has been on trial for a good many years, and, while its operation has, on the whole, been excellent, it would be strange if it should not now be found capable of improvement in many respects. There can be little doubt that the tendency of free institutions will be more and more in the direction of local management of all matters of purely local concern. This general principle is capable of wide application, and of being wrought out through an almost infinite series of divisions and subdivisions of the body politic. The more perfect the machinery, the less the danger of neglect of local rights and interests on the one hand, and of congestion and blocking of wheels in the higher legislative organizations on the other. This is the true "home rule." Few things are more suggestive of waste of power, disproportion between means and ends, and general political incapacity or blundering, than the sight of great legislative bodies striving hopelessly to overtake a multitude of petty details.

THERE is not, and never yet has been, any such thing as a pure democracy. Those who are accustomed to congratulate themselves that in democratic Canada and in the still more democratic Republic beside us, the voice of the Governments and Legislatures is the voice of the people, will be astonished, on reflection, to find how little the mass of the people have to do with shaping the course of legislation. The New York *Tribune* points out that while the half-million workers in the towns and cities of the United States who are organized as the Knights of Labour are continually putting forth their opinions as those of American labourers, the ten millions of farmers, who really do more work than all other classes of labourers put together, do not ordinarily take the trouble to express their ideas, even on the most important topics. The same thing is true of Canada. The apparent anomaly is easily explained by the comparative isolation of each of the multitudinous units which make up the agricultural population. But this fact does not make the thing itself less undesirable and unfair. The *Tribune* has been inviting the farmers to express their wishes on the subject of tariff reform. If it conducts the investigation fairly, and succeeds in making it real and reliable, it may very likely, as the leading journalistic representative of the extreme protectionist view, find that it reckons without its host in assuming that the bulk of the agricultural population is on its side. It seems hardly likely that the average hard-headed farmer will be easily persuaded that paying taxes on the necessities of life lessens the cost of those necessities, or helps him in the struggle to "make ends meet." In like manner the Commercial Unionists, who are appealing specially to the Canadian farmer to accept their specific, may find themselves mistaken in supposing the sturdy yeomen ready to surrender their commercial autonomy and make their country, for purposes of trade, a mere annex of the United States. But if

they can really get the attention of the farmers, and induce them to take a more active and intelligent interest in public affairs, the agitation will have served at least one useful purpose.

THE Government of Manitoba is evidently *in extremis*. Mr. Norquay has long played his cards skilfully. We do not say he has played them well, for straightforwardness and consistency usually succeed best in the end, even apart from moral considerations and consequences. Whatever shape the plans for his retirement, now seemingly inevitable, and the establishment of his successor may finally assume, there is one feature of the situation which should be carefully noted by all who wish for harmony and stability in the Canadian Confederation. We refer to the running to and fro between Winnipeg and Ottawa, and the almost open consultations, not to say intrigues between the Dominion authorities and the Manitoba politicians. Whether the programme of future movements is being correctly forecast in the press, or otherwise, there is scarcely room to doubt that both the leader of the moribund provincial administration, and the new aspirant to the premiership have sought counsel and help from Ottawa. Such a course, though but too well supported by precedent, is vicious in principle and mischievous in practice. The independence of the local administrations is essential to the peace and prosperity of the Union. Few things would be more fruitful of distrust, dissension, and possible disruption than any well-founded suspicion of collusion between the Dominion Government and local politicians for purposes of party manipulation. Any interference with the free will and choice of the local electorates is sure sooner or later to be fruitful of dissensions. If the people of Manitoba are either spirited or wise they will mark their resentment of the weakness or self-seeking which drives local leaders to invoke Ottawa interference or influence in the formation or re-construction of the local Cabinet.

THERE can be little doubt that some mode of settlement of the Manitoba and North-West railway question will be proposed by the Dominion Government at the approaching session of Parliament. There is nothing inherently improbable in the Brandon *Mail's* announcement that the settlement will take the shape of a guarantee of the bonds of the Canadian Pacific Railway to a certain amount, on consideration of its abandonment of all its monopoly rights. The directors and shareholders of the company must be by this time pretty well convinced that the maintenance of the monopoly is impossible. No Government could protect them in its exercise for the balance of the full term stipulated without serious danger of insurrection, and of that both the Government and the country have already had more than enough. On the other hand it will no doubt be stoutly contended that we have also had more than enough of huge subsidies to this great corporation. But however ill-advised may have been the original agreement with the company, and however indefensible any subsequent advance from the overdrawn Dominion exchequer, it is clear that Canada can afford neither to maintain the monopoly nor to break faith with the company. There is, it is true, excellent reason for believing that the Manitoba contention is sound, and that the Dominion Government had no right, and perhaps no intention, to restrict that Province in the exercise of its constitutional powers. This fact, however valid as a plea for lessening the amount of damages to be paid the company in lieu of the promised monopoly, is of no weight whatever in regard to the added portion of Manitoba and the great North-West beyond, in respect to which the monopoly is unquestioned, and to which it would soon become as obnoxious and the demand for free railroad communication with their southern neighbours as imperative as they now are in the older districts of Manitoba. The lesson is likely to be an expensive one to the Dominion. It is to be hoped that it will be well coned.

"EVERY good Catholic is an Ultramontane." This has, in substance, been recently asserted by a Canadian Catholic whose words should carry weight. We do not remember to have seen the sentiment repudiated by any one qualified to speak for the Catholics of Canada, though it is to be hoped, in the interests of both Catholicism and patriotism, that it is not the teaching of the prelates and clergy of that Church in the Dominion. As Bishop Coxe demonstrated at the recent meeting of the Evangelical Alliance at Washington, such has not been the teaching of the most eminent Catholic divines, jurists, and canonists in the past. Bossuet said, "Let us be Catholics, but let us be Gallicans." "The Roman pontiffs retained the French bishops in full communion after the Declaration of 1682." "Even Pius IX., in his better days, banished them [the Jesuits, which is but another name for the later term Ultramontanists] from Rome." "So then, as a Roman Catholic, if I were one," says Bishop Coxe, "I should quote 'Infallibility' for my position that Ultramontanism is at war with governments, with Christian civilization, and with the peace and integrity of the