

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** I think the leader of the Government stated the exact amount, and I have sent for "Hansard" to verify my recollection upon that point.

**Mr. LAURIER.** It may be so, but I am under a different impression. According to my recollection, the Prime Minister stated that the ballot was the invention of Mr. Durocher. But I do not think he stated what it was going to cost the country. Though last year the Act was passed, it was passed unanimously at the end of the session, and perhaps, it did not meet, at that time, with sufficient consideration. The hon. gentleman must agree that we cannot devise a ballot which will be wholly free from the difficulties of working. But I attach great importance to this—that the form of ballot has been known, that it has passed through the courts, and that the courts have established upon it a series of decisions, a system of jurisprudence. Thus the elector knows generally what interpretation is to be put upon the different questions arising, and there is diffused throughout the country a knowledge of what the law is. I would not change the law unless there was in the new system a manifest improvement. This proposal is to substitute another form, which may have its own merits, which merits may not overbear the known and guarded defects of the previous form, and I question if there is any such advantage as is thought in the change. The result of the experience of this year has shown that there has been no improvement in this respect, as proven by the Quebec election. Had that election been held in the old form, what was practically an injustice to the people of Quebec would not have taken place.

**Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT.** I do not think that anybody understood last year, when this matter was discussed, that we were to be asked to buy a simple invention of this kind. I remember the discussion now, and I think the impression made upon the members on this side, and of members generally, was that the invention was some new form of ballot box which was supposed to be capable of protecting the country against fraud, and not a mere slip of paper arranged in a particular fashion. I do not want to exercise our rights too rigorously, but I am bound to say that I think that the sum of \$2,500 of public money is a great deal too much to pay for an invention such as this. I do not think it is worth \$2,500, or even \$1,000. I think the owner would be amply remunerated for the invention, for the exercise of brains and the time occupied, by one-fifth part of that sum. I must say, whatever may have been said at that time. I did not understand that what we were asked to pay for was simply a little bit of paper arranged in a slightly different way from the ballot hitherto in use.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** The simpler the invention, very often, the more valuable it is.

**Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).** I think that, in the face of the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, as to the interpretation put upon the law in the province of Quebec, the Minister of Justice ought to propose to amend the law and to provide that the provision for marking the ballot within the disc ought to be directory and not mandatory. It seems to me that if the mark is so placed as to show very clearly for whom the voter intended to record his vote, that that ought to be sufficient. The object of adopting this ballot is not to put the voter in a worse position than he was in before.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** I am sure the House will allow me to give a reference to the statement made by the late leader of the Government on this point. Last session he mentioned the exact sum, so that I suppose that that will, on this item, settle the point. On the 20th July last he said:

The ballot paper is patented. But an arrangement has been made by which, if the Government should choose to use the ballot, we obtain the right to use it for the sum of \$2,500. We say that it will be very beneficial to adopt this form of ballot paper throughout Canada for the purpose of preventing the spoiling of ballots.

That is quite in line with the hon. gentleman's contention, and mine, of that clause to which he referred. The Prime Minister went on to explain what we know of this form of ballot. If hon. gentlemen will refer to the Act, they will see that it was not to come into force—that section of it—until a proclamation was made, and that, no doubt, is why the leader of the Government stated that if we decided to adopt this form of ballot, we had agreed to pay. And the proclamation issued shortly before these elections.

**Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).** You require a short declaratory Act.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** No, because the Act provided for a proclamation.

**Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).** But the courts construed the clause adversely.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** We can't help that.

**Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).** Yes, you can—by an amendment of the law.

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** I think the leader of the Opposition will not say that we should amend the law because of that decision.

**Mr. MILLS (Bothwell).** Surely—

**Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER.** One court is not to control the legislation of this country. I do not think the hon. leader of