

was compelled, even two days before the election, to issue those certificates, which he believed to be a fraud himself. If it had not been for the use of those certified voters, I should have been returned by a much larger majority than I received. As regards the returns, I believe I might have been gazetted some two weeks earlier than I was. It is true, I live a little distance from here, although no further than the hon. gentleman for Selkirk (Mr. Daly), and it seems to me I ought to have been gazetted at the same date he was, instead of two weeks later. I do not know whether that was the fault of the returning officer or the fault of the officials in Ottawa. I think it is of the utmost importance that these documents should be laid before the House, because there is a wholesale charge made against all the returning officers. Some of them must be accused wrongfully. From the discussions I have heard to-night it appears that the returns have not been gazetted as received, but it is not right to accuse those returning officers who have done their duty and made their returns punctually, as the Grit returning officer from Hastings made his. My hon. friend from Hastings was the first gentleman gazetted, I believe, and it was done by a Grit returning officer. It is not right that this wholesale charge should stand against the returning officers, therefore I think the returns asked for by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) should be brought down.

Mr. McMULLEN. I desire to say with reference to the returning officer in my constituency, that previous to the last election he had acted as such for many years, and held the position of registrar. He was not by any means a Reformer or a Grit. He was appointed by the Government of Sandfield Macdonald, when my esteemed friend, the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Carling) was a member of the Government. Undoubtedly he was an honest man, and he discharged the duties of returning officer ever since Confederation. I cannot understand for what reason he was jilted at the last election, and another man appointed in his place. I did hear, after the election was over, something about a cause dating since the election of 1882. I believe that at that time, when Senator Plumb was my opponent, he did not carry out what my opponent thought he should have done in connection with the declaration, and it was owing to that fact that a quiet hint was given to him that he would not be permitted to occupy the position any longer. The man that was appointed in his place performed the duties very creditably for a new man, and I have no fault to find, further than this, that I was not gazetted before the 3rd of April. Now, on the 4th of March, I received my certificate of having been duly elected member for North Wellington. I believe the returning officer sent forward his return at the proper period after the necessary number of days had elapsed that these papers should remain in his hands. He told me he would make his return just so soon as the time was up, and I believe he did so. If he did so, those papers would arrive at Ottawa on 10th March, and they were held by the official in whose charge they were until 3rd April. I cannot understand why that should have taken place. I simply say it appears singular it should have happened. With respect to the question of protest, on which a good deal has been said, and as to the probability of a protest being entered against those members last gazetted, I would say this: It will be no new thing for North Wellington to have a protest. There has not been an election in that riding, from Confederation to the present time, when a Reformer has been elected, at which a protest has not been entered. There has never been a protest in that riding entered against a Conservative, but all the Reformers returned have been protested against. So a protest will be nothing new or strange, and I do not feel at all anxious about it, for it is no use getting excited, but it is better to take it coolly. I desire

to offer these remarks in vindication of the gentleman who discharged the duties of returning officer from 1867 down to a recent day, and I believe if anything tended to add to my majority it was the dismissal of that officer from his position and the appointment of a stranger. He was well known and well liked and many of his friends felt deeply aggrieved at his removal; and this action, no doubt, added largely also to the majority of my friend from Centre Wellington (Mr. Semple), because that officer lived in Peel, and friends sympathised with him and manifested their condemnation of the action of the Government in removing him from the position he had occupied for so many years and the duties of which he had discharged so efficiently, and appointing a stranger, although I frankly admit that the recent returning officer endeavored to discharge his duties faithfully and to the best of his ability, and I believe he did so on every occasion, even up to forwarding the returns.

Mr. PLATT. It is pleasing to know that in the general and sweeping charge made against the action of the returning officers there are, here and there, instances where we are able to exonerate them from the charge made. I wish to add to the list of those against whom no charge, so far as I know, can be laid, the returning officer of the county which I represent. My grievance in the matter under discussion, is perhaps as great as that of any hon. member, still I am not able to lay any charge at the door of the returning officer, notwithstanding the fact that that officer was, and is to-day, the secretary of the Liberal-Conservative Association of the county and was solicitor for the Conservative party during the revision of the lists. It seems, however, that where the evil instrument could not be found in the constituency such instrument was found at the Capital. I have made some enquiry, and I trust the papers connected with the matter will be brought down. I know that the return from the county of Prince Edward was forwarded to Ottawa on 9th March. I know that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery acknowledged the receipt of that return on 11th March. I know that no correspondence took place between that officer and the returning officer of that county between that time and the time of the gazetting. I have further to state that the officer found time, on 11th March, to acknowledge the receipt of the return, but he did not find time to send a message to the printer of the *Gazette* for the issue of the 12th, nor did he find time to send the message by the 19th, nor by the 26th, nor by 2nd April, and it was not till 9th April that my return was gazetted. I trust the papers will be brought down in order that we may ascertain the reason of the delay. I make no charge. It may be that in some instances correspondence was necessary between the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery and the returning officer, but in my case no such correspondence took place, and no such correspondence was necessary. As has been said the law directs and commands that that officer shall publish the returns in the next *Gazette*. This return was acknowledged on 11th March, and not published till 9th April.

Mr. DAVIN. I wish to call the attention of the House to what has been done in the North-West Territories, though the leader of the Opposition has not alluded to what has been done there, because if the same principles guided the Administration in the appointment of returning officers in other parts of the Dominion as guided them in the North-West Territories, then they must have acted with conspicuous fairness. We had in the constituency for the hon. member for East Assiniboia (Mr. Perley) Mr. Hugel as returning officer, an old supporter, and I believe still a supporter of hon. gentlemen opposite.

An hon. MEMBER. No; he is a Tory.

Mr. DAVIN. Is he a Tory now? I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is in a position to say whether Mr.