

by a committee of the House and not by the courts. There were pannels formed, and when a committee was chosen it was two and two, two from the Liberals and two from the Conservatives. The chairman was selected by ballot, and a number of the leading lawyers in the House were put on this pannel, perhaps four or five or six, and the name of the chairman was drawn. When his name was drawn it went around the House at once that so-and-so would be unseated, or so-and-so would be confirmed in his seat, depending entirely on the choice of the chairman. That was the condition of things at that time. I was on the chairman's pannel and know something about it. I say for myself that I did not follow the rule in vogue at that time. As to the conditions of the trials in those days, it was a perfect farce. I will just mention one case. There was an election of three members in the city of Quebec in 1857. They were elected illegally by names being added on the voters' list. It was notorious and it was not denied. The committee was chosen and it so happened that a friend of the member was chosen as chairman. The inquiry went on year after year, session after session, until the very last session of that parliament, and when the guns were being fired for prorogation the committee brought in a report unseating the member. That was an illustration of the methods that were pursued in those days. That is an absolute fact—just as true as I stand here. I know all about it. That was a condition of things which the Liberals at all events endeavoured to mend. They did their part, not but what the Conservatives did the same. I am willing to give tribute to both sides for the various changes that I could enumerate from the earliest period to the present time, but I do say that a large part of the credit in reference to the ballot system is due to the Bill drawn up in 1874 by the government of which I was a member. Any hon. gentleman who will take the trouble to look at chapter 9 of the Dominion Elections Act of 1874 will find confirmation of the statement that I have made that the first substantial attempt that was made to secure pure elections, and to exclude bribery, was made by the Mackenzie administration in 1874. I do not know that I will pursue that subject any further.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT.

than to say I shall always be glad, and I am quite sure the members of this government will always be glad to receive any suggestion that will tend in any way to improve the election law. This House will have an opportunity of passing on it, and a Bill will come before the House and will be submitted, no doubt, to a committee on both sides, and if the law can be improved in any way, I have no doubt the leading members on both sides will cordially support each other in bringing about that result. I have, perhaps, somewhat advanced views on that subject. I believe in compulsory voting. I believe that would have a good effect. There are a large number of men who on occasions of elections hold back and wont vote, hoping to be bribed by one side or the other. I would make it compulsory that every man should go to the poll and drop in a ballot. It may be a blank ballot. He need not sign for Smith or Brown unless he wishes to, but it is due to the community that he as a citizen should take his part in the administration of the laws of the country, and I supported that proposition thirty odd years ago. It was first brought up by the late Mr. Bethune in the Ontario Legislature in 1873 or 1874. I think it would be a move in the right direction.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Might I ask the hon. gentlemen if that is to be one of the provisions of the new law?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—No, I do not know that it is. I do not think the government have considered it. I have perhaps myself sometimes mentioned it as my own view, but it has not been adopted. I shall be glad if it is adopted, and if it is not adopted in the other House I shall be glad to see this House adopt it, because I am convinced it will be a move in the right direction. Then I should not allow any man to be a deputy returning officer or clerk at an election unless he is a resident in the locality. If he be a freeholder or householder so much the better. He should not be an outsider but should be a man known to the people who come up to vote, a man occupying some responsible position, in order that there might be some security that he would discharge the duty imposed upon him. There are several other suggestions I may make