

and Elections had in a manner enabled him to decide that in moving that amendment the Minister of Justice had acknowledged that the question was one with which the House was competent to deal. He thought the argument a splendid one, and thought that if it was sound they ought all to move against its being sent before any Committee previous to being dealt with by the House. He did not regret what he had done 25 years ago in a similar case, and would give a similar vote in this case. (*Cheers.*)

Hon. Mr. BLAKE was pained to see the position taken up by the hon. member for Vancouver. That gentleman, if he did not say it in as many words, left the impression upon the House, when he said that he was not responsible for what the House had done in 1848, that he was opposed to the action they had then taken in the matter. He had confessed to having felt irritated about it, and had consulted a gentleman whom he cited as a witness but who was not no longer in the land of the living, and was told that the matter could not be put right, according to English practice except through the medium of an Election Committee.

Was the House to understand that it was against his will and in spite of his remonstrances that he was forced by friends to accept the decision of the House upon the question of his right to take his seat in the House, or that he sacrificed his own feelings for the sake of his party and permitted them to remain in ignorance of the fact?

He (Hon. Mr. Blake) must be permitted in ignorance of the facts of the case to retain the impression that the hon. gentleman did not object to the course taken by his friends, but that he had assented to it throughout. He (Hon. Mr. Blake) had always heard that the affair was a feather in the cap of the hon. gentlemen which had had no little influence in elevating him to a position on the Ministerial benches. Shortly afterwards the hon. gentleman was called upon to vote upon this same question himself, when the hon. gentleman was himself in the House. The proceeding which commenced upon the day upon which the House determined to deal with his case as a question of privilege were terminated, and the gentleman who had taken his seat declared guilty of a breach of privilege. The hon. gentleman had given his consent to the proceedings, and his name was recorded on the journals of the House as having voted upon the motion made upon the question. (*Cheers.*)

Yet he (Hon. Mr. Blake) gathered from what the hon. gentleman had said that, though 25 years after the event referred to, he rather thought the House had done wrong. (*Laughter.*) He requested to be allowed to state a fact which might not be known to all. Twenty-four years ago the hon. gentleman was on the opposite side of the House from that he now occupied, and another man illegally occupied his place. Today the hon. gentleman was himself illegally occupying a seat in the House. He was sitting for the constituency of Vancouver, and he trembled lest the facts should be inquired into. It was well known that one of the legal requirements of the representative of Vancouver was a residence of one year in the island previous to the period of his election. It was also well known that not more than twelve days previous to his election, the hon. gentleman was doing yeoman service for the Government which he was now supporting.

The resolution as well as the amendment called upon the House to decide whether or not the returning officer was wrong in taking upon himself to consider the qualification of a candidate or whether he should have confined himself to the question of who had the majority of votes. It was proposed by the hon. gentleman to adopt the most procrastinating course it was possible to adopt. In the constitution of the Committees there was always a decisive majority of the supporters of the Government, and a proof of this would be found by reference to the composition of the former Committees. The hon. gentleman showed how the delay would be caused by referring the matter from one committee to another, and even then the question at issue would probably not be decided, as the mover of the amendment had not directly put the question of whether the House had power or not to act in the matter. He showed that it was the practice in the English Parliament to decide similar questions without being petitioned.

In alluding to the contention that the decisions of the old Parliament were of no real weight, he said in 1857 the rules and regulations which prevailed in the old Parliament were adopted, with few exceptions, as the rules and regulations of this Parliament.

He quoted instances to show the Parliament of England had retained its inherent jurisdiction to deal with questions affecting the seats of members, and in the case in question the facts were apparent on the poll books. It was held that the case of O'Donovan Rossa was of a different and peculiar character, but He (Hon. Mr. Blake) failed to see the difference, and he maintained it was not considered on account of its peculiarities, but on account of its general principles. He maintained that the returning officer had not the right to return anyone except the one who had the majority of votes, and that the amendment called upon them to delay justice with a view to its ultimate denial.

The House could, in accordance with precedents, give to the people of Peterborough West their proper representative; if they did not, they would tell the returning officer that they had a power they ought not to possess, and it would give them to understand that they could decide who might or might not sit in that House until the long and procrastinate procedure thus proposed was gone through. (*Hear, hear.*)

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD deprecated the attack made by the hon. gentleman opposite upon his hon. friend for Vancouver, who after 21 years of political service was so highly esteemed throughout the country. The hon. gentleman opposite had complained of the delay which would be created, but a delay of a few days could make no difference whatever. It had also been argued that Standing and Special Committees reflected the opinions of the Government. This would always be so, for the opinions predominating in the House would predominate on the Committees.

He next referred to the case of O'Donovan Rossa, and said this was an exceptional case. A convict was not a man to act as a member of Parliament. The returning officer was abused for a dereliction of duty, yet his statement with regard to the number of votes would be received. If he made an error in one respect, he