

Mr. WELDON. I hope the committee will not accept the amendment. It was suggested two weeks ago when the Bill was before the committee that it might work injustice in this way, that one political party might take hold of the power under this Act and raise \$500 and attack their opponents, taking good care that they did not touch any friends of their own party, and in the prosecution of this course they might exhaust the \$500. It has been suggested that it would be fair to insert a sub-clause providing that if at this stage any other parties were interested in the further prosecution of the inquiry, and were convinced that this limited deposit would not secure the further investigation they desired and needed, they should have the right to put up a further sum of money in order to ensure the prolongation of the inquiry. That request seems to be perfectly fair and reasonable, and I, as a member of the committee, would be willing to accede to it. It has been pointed out in the House, and it has been very frequently referred to by newspapers criticising this Bill, that the weak point of the proposed measure is that in its operation it would be found most difficult to find counties in which people would be willing to put up so much money with a certainty that it would be expended. If at the outset we increase the sum from \$500 or \$1,000 it will be difficult to find sufficient public spirit animating people of different constituencies to put up so large a sum, and therefore I hope the hon. gentleman will not press his amendment, and if pressed, that the committee will not accept it in its present shape.

Mr. JEANNOTTE. (Translation.) I feel bound, Mr. Chairman, to insist and leave my amendment before the Chair. The first reason I have to do this is in connection with the expenses which such an inquiry will necessarily involve. The travelling expenses and the allowance to be paid the judge must be considered. But there is not only the judge, there are also the officers of the court, the clerk, the stenographers and the other costs inherent to such an inquiry. These expenses will amount to a large sum and indeed the trial stage of the proceedings will hardly be over when the deposit of \$500 will be exhausted. The fact is the court will hardly have been sitting two or three days when there will not be left a single dollar of this deposit; it will be exhausted by the payment of the costs I have already referred to. I will not dwell any further on this point, as I had occasion to refer to it on previous sittings. I now suppose that ten voters were indicted before the court, or incriminated in the course of the inquiry; I suppose that a 'commencement de preuve' was made against them; but all of a sudden, for want of money, the court discontinues its proceedings, how will the voters so accused or incriminated prove their innocence, for it might very well happen

that they should not be at all guilty? The court adjourning sine die on account of the deposit being exhausted, on account of there being no more money to pay the expenses, those citizens will lie under the charge of having sold their votes in not having any chance to prove the contrary. The Bill further states that if the judge should think he has before him a sufficient evidence that the accused parties took bribes, he will have to give them notice to appear before him and prove their innocence. But how will they prove it if the court suspended its proceedings for want of money? If the inquiry should be discontinued for want of funds, these citizens will have to lie under almost a dishonouring charge. That is not fair. Moreover, Mr. Chairman, if there should be no money, how could the court summon witnesses, since such witnesses could not be compelled to appear unless being handed over a sufficient sum to cover their travelling expenses? If it is really intended to pass a law having for its object to prevent bribery, we must give to those who will have to carry it out the means required for that purpose. If, on the contrary, that last is to remain a dead letter, we had better, I think, not pass it, for there are already too many such laws in our statutes. Let it be stated at once, and we will lose no more time in a useless discussion. I will make no further observations with respect to my amendment, for I had already several opportunities to express my views on that point. I leave my amendment before the committee; they may do what they like with it, but I insist on having a decision.

Mr. MULOCK. While some difference of opinion may prevail as to the merits of the amendment, I think in view of what has already occurred, it would be wise on the part of the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon) that he should accept the amendment. I sympathize with his Bill in some respects, and I should not like to see it jeopardized by the hon. member being too strongly wedded to every particular detail.

Mr. WELDON. I am not disposed to be too obstinate. I leave this question to the judgment of the committee.

Amendment agreed to : Yeas, 75 ; nays, 20.

On section 17,

Mr. JEANNOTTE. I desire to inquire whether Parliament itself will be the authority to disfranchise electors who have received bribes, or whether the Secretary of State will be such authority? It is declared by this Bill that the Secretary of State shall be the only party to declare such voters disqualified.

Mr. WELDON. This clause is simply to secure publicity.