

kind enough, without a motion, to bring down the correspondence between the Dominion Government and the Government of Nova Scotia respecting the appointment of Election Courts.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE:** Certainly.

**Right Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** said one feature worthy of consideration was that with respect to the petition being made by an elector alleging and putting in proof that corrupt practices had been resorted to by the candidates. This matter required consideration at a future period.

**Hon. Mr. BLAKE** trusted that his hon. friend would consider before the second reading of the bill the expediency of making some provision with regard to the other Provinces similar to that, he said, the House should adopt without regard to Quebec. As to appeals as to questions of fact, he did not think one judge should have the power of officially disposing of questions of fact. Appeal to the full Court on questions of fact he believed would be calculated to give greater confidence than would be given by the bill as it then stood. He suggested that the Quebec Court of Appeals should have authority to dispose of questions of this kind. He was of opinion that for election trials the whole judicial staff should be available.

He highly approved of the provisions for a preliminary examination, and for the production of documents. Those provisions had been in existence in some Courts in the country for the trial of ordinary cases, and they had conduced to an early and satisfactory disposition of these cases. With regard to the proposition to petition against the defeated candidate, it might be highly useful as a preventative of corrupt practices, and therefore he was disposed to give his hearty consent to that part of the bill.

**Hon. Mr. DORION** said the object of the Government was to make the bill as perfect as possible, and it would gladly avail itself of any good suggestions which might be made.

The bill was read a first time.

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### BILLS INTRODUCED

**Mr. PALMER** introduced a bill to incorporate the St. Croix Printing and Publishing Company.

**Mr. ROBILLARD** introduced a bill to amend the Act respecting procedure in criminal cases and other matters relating to criminal law (Sec. 29 of the Act 32-33 Vic.).

**Mr. APPLEBY** introduced a bill to incorporate the St. Calais and St. Stephen Railway Bridge Company.

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### THIRD READINGS

The following bills were then read a third time:

The bill to amend the Act respecting the construction of the Intercolonial Railway—**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE**.

The bill to amend the Act respecting prompt and summary administration of Criminal Justice in certain cases as respects the Province of New Brunswick—**Hon. Mr. DORION**.

The above bills were read and passed.

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### THE ELECTION BILL

**Hon. Mr. DORION** moved the second reading of the bill respecting the election of members of the House of Commons. He said that for twenty-five years past legislation had been directed to diminishing the evils of corrupt practices at elections, and anyone who had watched the progress of legislation could not but be struck with the advance that had been made.

The provisions of the old law required all the electors in a constituency to go and vote in one single part of the country, determined either by the returning officer or by the Government. This created great excitement, and at the first election which took place, in 1842, needless riots were the consequence. These riots occasioned loud calls for a change. Then polling places were given to every parish, and the days of polling were reduced to two. On this becoming law, the friends of the defeated candidates were accustomed to assembling and securing the books and papers, which prevented a proper return being made. In 1847, 1848 and 1849, there were several cases of this kind—sometimes with the connivance of the returning officers. One or two of these latter were brought to the bar of the House, and severe penalties were inflicted.

After 1849 commenced another era, when the poll-books were taken at the very polls themselves. After this the number of bogus votes taken and other abuses committed by the returning officers induced the Liberal Government in 1851 to provide that returning officers should not be men liable to be prejudiced by or for either candidates, and that they should be such persons as sheriffs and registrars. This was, like the other provision, attended with beneficial results.

Then came another improvement—the abolition of the show of hands. This practice had been the cause of very great trouble. Many people had been brought together to increase the apparent majority of one or other candidate, and it had often resulted in violence. Besides the show of hands the proclamation of elections was abolished. This had been accustomed to gathering together a large number of people, in reality only for eating, drinking and parading. In 1859 came another improvement in the checking of the voters lists by the municipal authorities. This too had acted most beneficially.

Some of the amendments introduced by the present measure had been advocated by the present Ministry. Among them was the system of polling on one day. At the recent elections the Government had, so far as was possible, made the experiment of this system, and, as everyone would say, with the most beneficial results. This would much simplify elections, prevent excitement, and prevent as much as possible Government interference as well as that of outsiders, who had in reality nothing to do with the contest. It would give more liberty to people to exercise the franchise, and enable them to obtain a better representation. This measure would