

the remarks made by the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Weldon) in reference to the protest for East Hastings. My hon. friend from West Hastings (Mr. Robertson) did not say that an honorable or any other arrangement had been come to between these parties. On the contrary—

Mr. WELDON (St. John). I did not mean to say that there was any actual agreement between them, but that there was an understanding that if the hon. member for West Hastings were not petitioned against, the hon. member for East Hastings should not be petitioned against.

Mr. BOWELL. The hon. gentleman has now stated what he probably intended to say, but the language he used was that an honorable arrangement had been come to between the member for East Hastings and the member for West Hastings that no petition should be entered, and that, as soon as the time expired for a petition to be entered against the hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Robertson) his friends took advantage of the situation, betrayed the confidence which had been reposed in them, and entered a protest against the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Burdett). The hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Robertson) did not say what the hon. gentleman attributed to him, but he said that, as far as he was individually concerned, he had done all he could to prevent a protest being made, but he qualified that statement by the remark that, when the proposition was made to him by the friends of the hon. member for East Hastings (Mr. Burdett), he told them that it would be absurd for him to attempt to speak for the electors of another constituency. There has been no breach of faith on the part of either of these parties. I have no doubt that both these gentlemen did their best to prevent a protest. My hon. friend behind me (Mr. Robertson) has stated that he tried to prevent a protest being entered, and my hon. friend in front (Mr. Burdett) says he tried to prevent a protest being entered against himself, which was very natural. But, if nothing was done in that election to implicate him in an improper act, there is no reason for him to call so many hard names.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Hear, hear.

Mr. BOWELL. Why "hear, hear"? The moment an hon. gentleman speaks on this side, we have an echo of "hear, hear" from several hon. gentlemen on that side.

Mr. LANDERKIN. No.

Mr. BOWELL. There is no one in the House who interrupts more than the hon. gentleman from Grey.

Mr. LANDERKIN. I never interrupted anyone in my life.

Mr. BOWELL. It is impossible for the hon. gentleman to hold his tongue for ten minutes, or even for five minutes when anything is said affecting his party. Every gentleman on the other side has been listened to courteously, except one, and there was a little noise while he was speaking, and at once steps were taken to stop that by all those on this side who took an interest in proper debate. But my hon. friend from Bothwell, as was said in reference to my friend, Mr. White, is a little pugnacious, and he is always very anxious to say "hear, hear" in a disapproving manner when anyone is speaking on this side. What I was saying was that, if there is nothing wrong in regard to the contest in East Hastings, my hon. friend who occupies that seat now has nothing to fear, but I must question the veracity of the reports which have been carried to him. I do not accuse him of making these statements, but, when he says that any member of the party in Hastings said that they would not only hound him out of political life, but would place him on his bier and would carry him to his grave, I do not believe that any such statements were made.

Mr. BOWELL.

Mr. BURDETT. I will prove that John White said in the Bank of Montreal, that when I got through all I would require would be a hearse.

Mr. BOWELL. I have no right, from a parliamentary standpoint or in parliamentary courtesy, to contradict the statement of the hon. gentleman, but, if there be no more truth in the statement which has been carried to him as to what Mr. White said, than there was in the statement with regard to myself, the hon. gentleman will find no ground for repeating these statements, for the remark which was attributed to Mr. White in regard to myself was without a scintilla of truth. This has nothing to do with the debate, but I mention it in order to show that my hon. friend should not make such statements unless he heard the expressions himself, or unless he has received them on evidence which is unimpeachable. I have said all that I intended to say, which is to state that the party to which I belong in the county of Hastings, and which I believe to be right, is one that I believe to be incapable of saying what is attributed to them. If any arrangements were made by that party in Hastings, they would have been carried out, but the people of Belleville, in another riding, had no more right to make an arrangement as to what the electors in East Hastings would do than the hon. gentleman opposite would have to make arrangements between my constituency and his own in Nova Scotia.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. All that the hon. gentleman has stated may be correct enough, but I will venture to say, from a tolerably long experience in these matters, that if the hon. member for West Hastings (Mr. Robertson) had been gazetted on the same day as my hon. friend from East Hastings (Mr. Burdett) you would have heard very little of a petition in East Hastings. It appears to me, though I am not offering a legal opinion, that, if one thing be clearer than another, it is that the law has been distinctly violated by returning officers, apparently in some cases, and if the statements of hon. members on the floor of this House are to be believed, by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in many cases. I want to call the attention of the First Minister and the attention of this House to this fact. My hon. friend from the county of Prince Edward (Mr. Platt), standing in his place in this House, has brought forward evidence which goes to show that our Clerk of the Crown in Chancery has deliberately made a false return to this House. This hon. gentleman states, as I understood him, that he himself saw a letter from Mr. Pope, in which Mr. Pope admitted the receipt of his return on a certain date, the 10th or 11th of the month, and that Mr. Pope has returned him on the 14th, three days later. I say that, if Mr. Pope did that, Mr. Pope has sent down a false return, and such a charge, so made by a member in his place, is one that ought to be investigated either by a special committee appointed for the purpose, or, if the House so chooses, by the Committee on Elections and Privileges. Let us understand why the Government object to go to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. They have been virtually charged by many hon. members in this House with having abused their influence and position in order to influence the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery to delay the proper gazetting of members according to the law. Are they afraid to allow the Clerk to be examined on oath before a committee of this House in public, for fear that that charge should be substantiated? If they are afraid to allow their doings to be brought to light, then I understand the pitiful evasion which has been attempted by causing him to report by letter to our Clerk at the Table; but, if their hands are clean, if they have nothing to fear, if no member of that Ministry is known to his colleagues to have abused his position in this matter, then I am at a loss to understand why they refuse to allow this gentleman