

ELECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron) moved second reading of Bill (No. 9) to amend the Acts respecting the election of members of the House of Commons. He said: I was not in the House last evening, when the Bill of the hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Wood) was moved. I understand, however, that upon the hon. member's moving the second reading, the Minister of Justice indicated his intention of referring all Bills amending the Electoral law to a select committee. If that is so, I shall not trouble the House with any explanation other than I gave on the first reading of the Bill.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I stated that there were some Bills on the paper relating to the Election Act and the Franchise Act which it would be better to refer to a committee, and I had in view this Bill as well as some others. This Bill contains some features which I object to, and some features which I think are embodied in the present law, but it also contains some provisions which I think are worthy of the consideration of a committee. If the hon. gentleman thinks fit to press it to a second reading and refer it to the same committee, I shall acquiesce.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and referred to the Committee on Bill No. 5.

MEMBERS' MILEAGE.

Mr. McMULLEN moved second reading of Bill (No. 43) further to amend the Act respecting the Senate and House of Commons. He said: In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, it is necessary, perhaps, for me to offer some explanations why I considered it necessary to introduce this measure. It will be within the recollection of hon. members who were members of the last Parliament, that an hon. gentleman, who represented the County of Shelburne, N.S., had, after his election, removed to the city of London, in England. On receiving notice that Parliament was about to assemble, he left London and came to Ottawa to discharge his duties for the County of Shelburne. On applying to the pay clerk for his mileage and answering the question as to where his mileage was to count from, a reference was made either to the Department of Justice or to some Minister, and the clerk was advised that, if the member for Shelburne was so disposed, he was entitled to mileage from London to Ottawa, and that mileage was paid to him. At the time, I objected to the law as it then stood, and I drew the attention of the Government to the matter and asked whether they intended to introduce legislation to prevent a repetition of incidents of that kind. No definite promise was made that they would introduce such legislation. I consider that when a man is elected as a representative of a constituency in this Dominion, he should at least be a resident of the Dominion, and that some provision should be made that, when a man becomes the representative of a county, he should not be permitted to remove to a foreign country or to any part of the world outside of this Dominion, and be allowed to draw mileage from that point to the city of Ottawa when he comes here to discharge his duty. My object is to provide that any senator or member of the House of Commons shall be entitled to mileage from his residence, which shall be in Canada, on coming to Ottawa to discharge his duties. That,

of course, requires that he must be a resident of this Dominion. I believe that, in the interests of the whole Dominion, the sooner we get down to the principle which is virtually carried out in the United States, that a man has to be a resident of the state and of the constituency he claims to represent, the better for all parties. I think that a man coming to this House should at least be a resident of the province in which he has his constituency. However, I do not wish to go so far at present, but we should ask at all events that the representatives of the people in this House or the senators in the other Chamber should be residents of this Dominion, and for this reason I have introduced the Bill now before the House.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the second time.

SECOND READING.

Bill (No. 45) to amend the Dominion Controverted Elections Act.—(Mr. Amyot.)

COMPULSORY VOTING.

Mr. AMYOT moved the second reading of Bill (No. 53) to make voting compulsory.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Will the hon. member explain?

Mr. AMYOT. The object of this Bill is to enforce upon every elector the obligation of performing the material act of voting, at least to act as if he were voting, that is, he must go to the poll and receive a ballot paper, then go into the polling booth and hand his paper over to the deputy returning officer. When he is in the room assigned for the purpose of depositing his ballot, he may vote as he likes, for whom he pleases, he may spoil his ballot paper, or do what he pleases with it, he may write down his name upon it, or may make as many crosses upon it as he likes. The Bill compels him to go there on his own responsibility, and relieves the candidates or the friends of the candidates, from paying any vehicle to transport him to the poll, or from paying for his day or half day that he may be off work to go to the poll. I know that in addressing this honourable House, composed of members who have gone through elections, I shall be easily understood. One of the great causes of electoral corruption is found in the fact that, in spite of the law against it, we have to pay for transporting the electors to the poll. I have seen it stated in the press that this Bill would be an infringement upon the liberty of the subject. This objection, at first sight, appears to be very serious, and in my view, any unnecessary restraint upon the liberty of the subject is blameable. But a moment's reflection will convince us that nearly all our laws are infringements upon the liberty of the subject. If we consider our municipal laws relating to road inspectors, the valuers or the assessors of property, and all the municipal officers whom the Legislature forces to act, we will see that the liberty of the subject is infringed upon. If we consider the restrictions on trade and commerce in the manufacture of liquors, in the selling of tobacco, in the imposition upon commerce of taxes in the shape of Customs laws, in fact on nearly every page of our statutes, we will see that for the general welfare private parties are asked to give up a portion of