

ing a Dominion Act in order to insure something like justice and fairness. Now, Sir, I can find nothing in this Act—and I have read it through with a great desire to discover all that was good in it—I can find nothing in this Act to recommend it. I will make one exception; there is one clause, and it is the only thing in the whole Act that I can find to recommend it, and that is the clause that provides that when there are two or more by-elections they shall all be held on the same day. I admit that is a good clause; but the hon. gentleman who compiled this law must have felt that in putting in that clause he was casting the greatest censure possible upon this Government. Why, Sir, has this Government done what this Bill requires, in providing that the by-elections shall be held on the same day? No, Sir. There never was a more scandalous manipulation of by-elections than has taken place recently. Look at what is taking place to-day in the county of Colchester. How long has that seat in Colchester been vacant? The hon. gentleman knows that the seat for Colchester has been vacant for between three and four months—though I do not remember the exact date. I ask the hon. gentleman why is it that the county of Colchester, in that small province of Nova Scotia, which requires all its representatives in this House to obtain fair consideration—why is it that that important constituency, one of the finest constituencies in the province of Nova Scotia, has been disfranchised by the Government? Can the hon. gentleman give me any reason except a desire to obtain some unfair, some unjust, some improper influence in the control of that election? The election in Colchester is held back until the local elections are suddenly sprung upon the province, and it is now held upon the same day as the local elections. What does the hon. gentleman say with reference to my hon. friend from Champlain (Mr. Marcotte)? Does not this Bill brand the Government with being guilty of an act of gross impropriety in providing that, in justice to the rights of the people of this country, the by-elections should be held on the same day? The hon. gentleman knows that months after that seat was vacant in the province of Quebec, he was afraid, as I have not hesitated to say on a former occasion—he was afraid to challenge the independent opinion of the province of Quebec; but he was ready to rush an election down in Gaspé, in a remote part of the province, where exceptional influences of a powerful character could be brought to bear. Before the late member was scarcely cold in his grave a writ was issued and sent down there, while the independent electors of Champlain were denied the sacred privilege of putting their verdict on record, because the First Minister was afraid to give them the opportunity of expressing their opinion. Why, Sir, have Colchester and Champlain remained vacant

since the 25th of March, while the House has been nearly a month in session? I say that these important constituencies have been disfranchised for nearly a month. Is that just? Is it right? If so, why does the Government not propose to continue that practice? As I suggested the other day, the hon. member for North Wellington (Mr. McMullen) was obliged to bring in a Bill to protect the Government from the temptation to which the First Minister admitted they were subjected in regard to the civil service; and so I say to-day that the Solicitor General is obliged to bring in a Bill to prevent this Government from acting unjustly to this House and to the people of this country, and to compel them to hold by-elections on the same day. Sir, I hope this Bill will never become law, and I do not think it ever will. In saying so, I pay a great compliment to the First Minister, because I believe that after sober second-thought he will come to the conclusion that a wiser and better Bill can be brought down, one that will reflect more credit upon the Government, and be more beneficial to the country than this one; and it is on that ground that I say I do not think this Bill will ever become law. But if it should become law, I would suggest to my hon. friend that he should protect the Government once more against themselves, and provide not only that they should hold all the by-elections on one day, but within a certain limited period from the time the seats become vacant. I must say that, judging from the past, they ought to be only too thankful to be again protected from themselves, and protected from the position they occupy here to-day of being challenged and condemned for keeping two important constituencies unrepresented in this House for a month after this session began, although the seats were open months before.

It being Six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

### After Recess.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. Mr. Speaker, I will now deal with a very important branch of this Bill. The desire constantly expressed by hon. members who are now on the other side of the House has been that every possible effort should be made to render any corrupt practice in regard to elections as impossible as legislation could make it. That is a sentiment I think, Sir, that will receive the ready assent of hon. gentlemen in all parts of this House, and I am quite sure anything in the form of relaxation of the measures that have been found necessary to secure purity in elections will be readily admitted to be very desirable, and that any movement in the other direction will be found to be very objectionable. I find that in several respects this Bill makes a new departure and