

the statement made that the fault lies at his door to a greater extent even than the faults applicable to himself in the way of gazetting, namely, the fault of making an erroneous return. I do not charge him with that more than the circumstances would imply, but is it not the fact that these returning officers were competent on the 9th of March to give in their returns, and should their returns not have reached the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery earlier than the 31st of March? Does not that demand enquiry? Yet the hon. gentleman's motion proposes to wave that away as a matter of no consequence, as a matter to which there is to be no remedy or application of the power of this House, with the view of enquiring into the causes which led to this apparent misconduct. The hon. gentleman's suggestion strikes me as one very unsatisfactory. It is proposed that a letter should be directed to be given by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, stating what his course was. But we know what his course was. Here it is. We have got the dates at which he received the various papers; we have the dates at which he gazetted the various returns; we have the only cases in which he had any correspondence with the returning officers, after he had received the returns—I think there were but two—and, therefore, in all the other cases there was nothing for him to do, for nothing he did, except open the papers which were received by him, according to his account, on that day. It was obvious, from the correspondence that appeared in the newspapers, and from an interview with the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, that the blame was to be put on the returning officers. The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery said the returns were, in many cases, very defective, and that it would be a good thing if some of the returning officers were brought to the bar in consequence of neglect of duty, and so forth. It rather looked, from these statements in two papers of opposite politics, in identically the same terms, as if the delays, which had been so apparently flagrant, were caused by the fault of the returning officers. For that reason it was suggested that we should see in what cases there had been any correspondence, and what was the purpose of that correspondence. The Clerk of the Crown had the opportunity, and he availed himself of it to make a statement in two cases of the cause of delay, so that he leaves the whole question entirely untouched as regards the other cases. Assuming the accuracy of the statement of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, assuming that he received the returns in all cases as late as he says—I have taken those four weeks which bore the stress of the election, from Saturday, 5th March, to Friday, 1st of April, in which there were about one hundred and eighty returns, according to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, received by him. Of these returns about ninety-eight were Conservatives, about four occupied more or less doubtful positions, and seventy-eight were Reformers. Now there were gazetted in the first *Gazette* ninety-three out of ninety-eight Conservatives, leaving only five Conservatives in respect of whom the law was violated when it affected hon. gentlemen opposite. I will not say absolutely violated, because, of course, there are some causes; for instance, the returns might be received very late Friday night, and it might be impossible to carry out the law, and that is the reason I began with Saturday, not taking the returns of the preceding Friday, because several, with no apparent favoritism, at that early period had been omitted. There may be some cases of this kind. But you will find it was possible for the Clerk of the Crown to gazette, and he did gazette, ninety-three out of the ninety-eight Conservatives returned in those four weeks. There were seventy-eight Reformers returned practically in the same four weeks, yet only fifteen was the Clerk of the Crown able to gazette according to law. Thus it appears that almost all the Con-

Mr. BLAKE.

servatives were gazetted and hardly any of the Reformers. Of course, we know there is such a thing as the doctrine of chance, but the doctrine of chance applied to 180 cases with these results proves to you there is more than chance in the matter. No man with a grave face can say—

Mr. BOWELL. The chances were against you.

Mr. BLAKE. Yes, in this as in other things, because the dice were loaded.

Mr. MILLS. And by the First Minister.

Mr. BLAKE. No man can say that the law was incapable of being observed out of seventy-eight cases on the one side, while it was quite capable of being observed, and was observed, in ninety-three out of ninety-eight cases on the other side. But that is not all. As well as I can make it out, of these sixty-three Reformers about twenty-seven were held over one *Gazette*, and of those twenty-seven no less than twelve were held over for fourteen days; for, assuming the returns were received on Saturday too late to be gazetted in that week's *Gazette*, there was the whole week from that Saturday exhausted by the Clerk of the Crown; still he was unable to put them in the next Saturday, and consequently another week had to elapse, so that fourteen days, in the case of twelve of these men, was exhausted before the law was complied with in their cases. There were twenty-five Reformers held over for two *Gazettes*. Two of them sixteen days, four seventeen days, ten eighteen days, seven nineteen days, two twenty-one days, making really three *Gazettes*, the returns having been received on Saturday and gazetted Saturday three weeks later. That makes the twenty-five. There were nine Reformers held over for three *Gazettes*, seven of them twenty-two days' delay, one twenty-three, and one twenty-six. In all, the gazetting of sixty-three Reformers was postponed, and this large number of Reformers whom I have referred to were left over not for one day, or two days, or three days or four days, but postponed, as I have said, the shortest time of all but fifteen being fourteen days, and a very much longer time for all the remainder. Now, take the Province of Quebec. There, as well as I can make out—and I was not able to go over these papers a second time, and there may possibly be an error or two in them—there were twenty-five cases in which the gazetting was delayed. There were three cases in which the *Gazette* was passed over—one for ten days, one for twelve days, and one for fourteen days. There were seventeen cases in which two *Gazettes* were passed over, one for sixteen days, one for seventeen days, and fifteen for nineteen days, and there were five cases in which three *Gazettes* were passed over, in each case for twenty-two days; and in these cases in which the gazetting was delayed, twenty-three belonged to the Opposition and the other two were the cases of Nicolet and Montcalm, in regard to which the unfortunates who were delayed were not to be credited to our side of the House. So there were twenty-three to two. In New Brunswick there were seven cases of delay, five in which one *Gazette* was passed over, three by ten days, one by eleven days and one by twelve days; there was one in regard to whom two *Gazettes* were passed over by eighteen days—my hon. friend from Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell)—and there was one in regard to whom three *Gazettes* were passed over by twenty-two days, my hon. friend from Charlotte (Mr. Gillmor). Of these seven cases, six belonged to the Opposition, and only one to the Government, and a number of them were very long delays. In Nova Scotia there were five cases of delay of fourteen days each, all being, according to this doctrine of chance, on the Reform side; and in Prince Edward Island there were four cases of delay of fourteen days each, all being also Reform. So, in the Maritime Provinces there were sixteen cases of delay, fifteen