

Hon. Mr. McSWEENEY—The government were defeated.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I am not going to accuse the government of having done anything wilfully wrong. I will show you that the New Brunswick government made a mistake and did not know it and there is the same mistake in this Bill. Take my own riding, the electoral division of Qu'Appelle, and take Wolseley, which is a subdivision in that electoral district. Already there is nominated Mr. Brown, a very creditable and worthy man, as the candidate for next election. Mr. Lake, the present member, is the Conservative. At the last election they had for returning officer a Mr. Roach. I know nothing about him, but he is a strong party man and a good many have not a high opinion of his political experience. Supposing they appoint him; I will take the bogus name Tom Johnston, a strong friend of Mr. Brown. He goes to a man, Bill Smith, or any man who is a friend of Mr. Lake's and he says, 'Bill, I want you to vote for Brown.' He says: 'Well I am a Lake man.' He says to him: 'I will make it worth your while to vote for Brown,' and they finally agree upon a price which he is to receive for his vote. Hon. gentlemen opposite know that that is a general thing in Manitoba. That bargain is made a week or ten days before the election, before any election work is going on. Nobody knows about it. Johnston comes in to Bill Smith and they make their arrangement. The moment he makes that arrangement the agent will take out his pocket book and write the name of Bill Smith and the price, however it may be, and he will make a dot in front of the name. He will say to Bill Smith 'Do you see that mark? Now there is your mark below. I will be inside by the returning officer. You will come and get your ballot and go behind the screen and mark it. I will show my book to the returning officer, who is our friend and knows our business and show him the dot in front of your name, and the returning officer will put that mark on your ballot when you bring it back.' The man will see he is going to be discovered which way he votes.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE—There is a penalty of five years imprisonment for that.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I see the hon. gentleman from DeSalaberry does not understand this matter. The agent says: 'When the ballot comes out I will see the dot and see if you voted for Brown. That is all right: 'You deliver your goods and get your pay.'

Now the returning officer would not have marked the ballot at all; but by virtue of this clause I make the elector believe that he will mark it, and I take out my book and show him where I have marked it, and he will understand that the returning officer will mark the ballot and he will know how he voted. A man may be curious to see what the returning officer does, but most of the electors are in a hurry to get away. The penalty for placing any improper mark on the ballot is a heavy fine. The returning officer will never mark the ballot, but I have this clause to show the voter how it can be done and make him believe it. I do not hesitate to say that the result would be under that system of voting, a large number of men can be bribed in every subdivision in the whole of Canada, and if there are enough dishonest men among the electors who will sell their votes to carry the election they can succeed in every riding. While it is very commendable that a returning officer shall not be allowed to spoil a ballot, still the clause is open to abuse in the way I have mentioned. In committee I shall suggest an amendment. I think it is the duty of the government to make some amendment to that clause, which will prevent that class of bribery. I do not hesitate to say that the government have plenty of honest men whom they could appoint to a position of that kind who would be above suspicion, but the great majority of men that are appointed for these positions are men who are known to have been guilty of wrong doing.

What do you find in the district of Prince Albert? A man held an election there in a place where there was no subdivision at all and put down 150 names, though there was not a vote polled. He returned a man who was in the minority in the hundred real votes polled and kept the man who should have been returned out of his seat for two