

House of Commons Debates.

FOURTH SESSION—EIGHTH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, 7th July, 1899.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

BROCKVILLE AND WEST HURON ELECTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER. I have the honour to inform the House that in obedience to the Order of the House of yesterday, the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery is in attendance at the Table with all poll-books, voters' lists, and all other letters, documents and memoranda which have been transmitted to him by the respective returning officers, or which may otherwise be in his possession relating to the last election for the electoral district of Brockville, and to the last election for the electoral district of the West Riding of the County of Huron, respectively.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). Mr. Speaker, I desire to move, seconded by Mr. Haggart:

That the poll-books, voters' lists and all other papers, letters, documents and memoranda relating to the last election for the electoral district of Brockville and the last election for the electoral district of the west riding of the county of Huron, respectively, which have been produced by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, be referred to the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for the purpose of inquiring into and investigating the conduct of the respective returning officers and of the several deputy returning officers at and in connection with each of the said elections respectively; with power to send for persons, papers and records, and to report thereon with all convenient speed.

As I understood from the right hon. leader of the Government yesterday that the motion would not be opposed by the Government, I presume that it is not necessary for me to say anything further in support of it. If I might be allowed a word of personal reference to something that was said by the right hon. gentleman yesterday with regard to my warmth, I certainly did not intend to exhibit any unbecoming warmth, and I do not think I did exhibit any. In the remarks I made as to the evidence, I carefully guarded myself from suggesting what I could not presume to suggest until the facts were brought out, that any of these gentlemen were guilty. I have looked over the records of the past when certain charges were made, and I think I brought myself very much within the rule of temper in language which has been observed by

hon. gentlemen in the past. I might refer to the language of the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir Richard Cartwright) in connection with certain charges against Sir Adolphe Caron in 1892,—language in which that hon. gentleman did not exhibit quite the judicial temper which he was so desirous to inculcate upon me. On that occasion he said:

We have not sat in this House so long without understanding thoroughly that the hon. Postmaster General has been for many years one of the inner ring, and thoroughly familiar with all the machinery by which fields were fought and won in electoral campaigns. We have not been here for so many years, Sir, without knowing enough of the character of that hon. gentleman to know that being thus familiar with all the inner details of these campaigns, he is not, and I do not blame him for it, disposed to be made the scapegoat and to pay the whole cost of any little delinquencies that may come to light. Mr. Speaker, what my hon. friend has brought to light, and what I know well he will prove, if the opportunity is given him,—

He was not a member of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, but he was a member of this House, which had to consider the report of that committee—

—is after all, only part and parcel of that colossal scheme of corruption by which and under which Canada has been governed for the last fourteen years.

Well, I am willing to submit the temper of my language in connection with this matter in contrast with that. He continued as follows:—

I know well, Sir, and the Ministers of the Crown know well, how the elections of 1882 were won, how the elections of 1887 were won, how the elections of 1891 were won, and how the recent by-elections, if they will have it, were bought and sold likewise. Sir, we know that the merest corner of the veil was lifted by the disclosures of last session; and I say to this House that if this investigation and the others demanded by the Opposition, be had, we shall see, and all Canada will see, with regard to the mode in which Canada has been governed for these many years past, that not on this continent, Germany Hall itself not excepted, has there ever been such a system of organized corruption as that investigation and others like it would expose.

Now, I think probably the right hon. gentleman will agree with me that I did not exceed the calm, judicial temperance of language which the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce displayed on that occasion. I did also intend to refer, Sir, to some remarks made by yourself in debate on that occasion, and which exhibited a certain amount of warmth which I do not, however, consider at all inconsistent with the personal characteristics that justified the Liberal party in rais-