

right works. It seems an extraordinary anomaly that the law should stand as it has for so many years, and that Canadian publishers cannot publish in Canada what Americans can publish and send to Canada to be sold here. If the law should be altered, as I hope it will be this Session, so as to make the change I suggest, it would be greatly in the interest of the Canadian public and of the Canadian publishers. The former would have competition with the American reprints, and the latter the opportunity of doing a very large business which they are now debarred from doing. It would also be very advantageous to the English authors, who would get more of the author's tax than they are now getting for their works.

Mr. BOWELL. There is no objection to the adoption of the motion. I may point out that some of the information it is impossible for us to give. We can bring down the amount collected upon these copyrights, and the amount transmitted to the Imperial Government to be paid to the different authors, but there are no records in the Department to show the names of the works, or of the authors of the works, upon which these duties have been paid. The practice in the past has been that each port makes a return to the Department of the amount collected, with the names of the works upon which it has been collected, and these returns are, with the amount collected, transmitted to the Imperial Government. Such information as we can give, we will bring down as early as possible.

Motion agreed to.

TEA FROM CHINA AND JAPAN.

Mr. BOWMAN moved for :

Return of the quantity and value of tea imported from China and Japan, and entered at ports or outports of British Columbia, either for home consumption or in transit, from the 1st July, 1885, to the 1st April, 1887.

Mr. BOWELL. A portion of the information asked for by this motion it is impossible to furnish to the House. There is no record of the quantity of tea which passes in transit through the country. The other information will be brought down. Cars containing goods passing through the country, upon most occasions, are simply manifested as merchandise; a car may, therefore, be filled with a variety of articles which are simply passing through, of which no record is kept. I make this explanation merely to show why the record of all articles passing in transit through the Dominion cannot be kept in the Department.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE—ELECTION RETURNS.

Mr. MILLS. Before the Orders of the Day are called, I wish to bring to the attention of the House a matter of privilege of which I think it is not necessary that I should give any notice, because I believe it is always in order to bring under the attention of Parliament a question affecting the constitution of the Parliament itself or anything affecting the privileges of this House, or of members of this House. I think it is only necessary to look at what has transpired during the recent elections to see that the privileges of the House have been invaded by some of the officers who have been appointed by the Government as returning officers, or by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, either at the instance of the Government or upon their own motion. It is clear that we are having revived again, in a new form, difficulties and abuses that we supposed had been corrected by legislation in former years. There is no principle better settled in the United Kingdom than this: that it is a breach of duty on the part of any Minister of the Crown to interfere with the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in the discharge of his duties in the issue of the writs.

When the Crown dissolves Parliament, and an appeal is made to the country, the duties of the advisers of the Crown are in that respect at an end, and the issue of the writs is solely under the control of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, without any interference on the part of the Government or any member of the Government. It was found necessary in this country a few years ago, in order to put an end to the abuses—to the undue influence, which was being exercised by the Government upon the people in holding a general election—to adopt the law of simultaneous elections. If Ministers in this country had acted as they do in England, if they had refrained from exercising an improper interference with a public officer in the discharge of his duties, legislation upon that subject would have been altogether unnecessary. But those of us who remember the elections of 1867, and again in 1872, know how those elections were extended over several weeks, how the elections in those constituencies that were thought to be most favorable for the Government were brought on first, how the writs were issued to the parties authorised to hold elections in those constituencies before they were issued in cases where it was supposed the popular sentiment was less favorable to the Administration. Now, that abuse was terminated by the adoption of the law of simultaneous elections. The power improperly to interfere in such matters was taken away from the Administration; but we find, either by the improper influence of the Government, or by a notorious dereliction of duty on the part of public officers, either in the constituencies or at the Capital, that other abuses, scarcely less serious than those intended to be remedied by that Act, are again perpetrated. We know that the hon. gentlemen who are now on the Treasury benches repealed the law which gave to this country, to some extent, the protection which exists in the United Kingdom. The officers under whom elections are held in the United Kingdom are not named by the Administration. Anciently, the mayors of boroughs and towns were the parties to whom the writs were sent, and the sheriffs to whom the writs were sent in the shires were not appointed by the Administration; and to-day the parties are designated by law to whom the writs are issued, and under whose direction the elections are held. Well, Sir, the hon. gentleman repealed, or, through his influence, Parliament repealed, the law which designated certain officers as the parties by whom elections were to be held, and he has taken into his own hands their appointment. If there ever was a case where it was necessary that great care should be exercised, it was in the case when the Government undertook to assume an authority which might give it an undue influence, or power to exercise an undue authority, in the appointment of those officers. So far as I remember, there were no abuses existing in this country under the elections held by official appointees. In 1878, so far as I am aware, there was not a single complaint with regard to irregular elections. In the elections that have been held where the writs have been sent to the sheriffs and to registrars, no complaint has been made. These officers are responsible to the public; they have other responsible duties to discharge besides those with which they are entrusted in holding elections. They are men who are trained, in some degree, to the discharge of official duties; they are not liable to fall into the mistakes or to commit the blunders that are committed by men who are appointed for particular purposes, without any official experience, who are drawn from obscurity for the discharge of those duties which the Government imposes on them, and who go back into private life the moment the elections are over, to disappear as officials. Well, Sir, the Government has appointed, in many cases, extreme partisans for the purpose of holding the elections—men who were only known for their connection with the Tory party, men who held offices as members of