

ance of it that I think they should have. One clause of this Bill is very faulty. I am not going to blame the government and say that they purposely inserted it, but if it is allowed to pass as it stands, it is possible that not one Conservative or member of the opposition can be elected at the next Dominion election. I may say that I happened to be at a certain polling place at a recent election in New Brunswick where I discovered that they had made a mistake in the law. The election law of the province of New Brunswick was made by the hon. Minister of Public Works. He was attorney general in the New Brunswick government, and had the framing of the law. He is a clever and able lawyer—none more so than Mr. Pugsley. Mr. Hazen is a clever lawyer, and there are other clever and able lawyers in the New Brunswick assembly; still they enacted a law the effect of which not one of them knew. If they had known, and had been so disposed, and if there had been enough government supporters, and enough voters that could have been bought, there would not have been one member of the opposition elected in New Brunswick.

Hon. Mr. McSWEENEY—How is that?

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I will tell the House. This Bill has a clause in it which can be operated in the same way, and parliament should know how to do it. I am not reflecting upon the law because the Hon. Mr. Pugsley framed it, and did not know what he had made. The hon. leader of the opposition was in the same position, but two fellows in a backwoods settlement found out how they could successfully manipulate the ballot, and the result was that in two ridings in my old county—I was down there to see some of my friends and saw how the law worked—where Mr. Hazen expected to have from 35 to 40 of a majority, he had 10 of a minority. In another portion, where he expected to have quite a majority, he was in a minority, showing that the law was capable of the construction these men put upon it, and if the legislature had known the effect of it they would not have passed it. They did not take advantage of the law to carry out an extensive system of bribery, because they did not know about it, except in one or two places. This Bill is

open to the same objection as the New Brunswick law. Mr. Hazen said he would certainly repeal that section, and change the provision. The section which is faulty is section 21, which reads as follows:

21. Section 173 of the said Act is amended by adding at the end of paragraph (c) the following proviso:

Provided, however, that no ballot paper shall be rejected on account of any writing, number or mark placed thereon by any deputy returning officer.

In one respect that is a commendable clause. I hold that no elector should be deprived of his ballot, if he is honest and has not been bribed, he should not be deprived of his vote by the action of some returning officer. If that clause passes, a man canvassing for the votes can bribe people and nobody will know a thing about it, and it will be conducted as the nicest and pleasantest election you ever saw, and it is for me to show you how it can be done.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—Does the hon. gentleman charge for this?

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—No, but it is a patent. In order to illustrate my case correctly, I will take my own riding, and I will not get the names confused.

Hon. Mr. WATSON—I do not think that any hon. gentleman who believes he has a scheme on hand whereby he is able to defraud the electors or to carry an election by corrupt methods, should be permitted, even with the consent of the House, to divulge the secret.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I am giving it away to my hon. friends opposite.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—The hon. gentleman from Portage la Prairie is afraid that his own virtue will be affected.

Hon. Mr. PERLEY—I will not use the word 'unfortunate' because no man should use that word in a wrong transaction, but perhaps it is unfortunate that there is only one party can use this device and that is the government party. It is loading the dice, so to speak, because the government have the appointment of the returning officer. And it was argued that these returning officers were strong party men, who would do most anything in election times, and they did do it.