

exceeding two years; and any person convicted of any corrupt practice will become incapable of voting at any election, of holding any public office, and of sitting in the House of Commons for seven years. From the above it will be seen that while the present Act re-enacts a great deal of old law, it extends the definition of corrupt practices, and makes the punishment for them far more stringent than before.

We next come to what are called "illegal practices." Of these there are several. Thus no payment may be made for carrying voters to the poll, nor for permitting bills to be posted on a wall, nor the use of any committee-room beyond the number limited by the Act; and it is also an illegal practice for a candidate or his agent to incur a greater expense than is allowed by the Act, or to induce any person to vote who is by law prohibited from voting, or to publish knowingly a false announcement that a candidate has withdrawn from a contest. A person may be convicted of an illegal practice on summary conviction, and will thereupon become liable to a penalty of £100, and will be incapable of voting for a period of five years at any election within the county or borough where the offence was committed. Besides "illegal practices," the Act constitutes as illegalities what are described as "illegal payment, employment, and hiring." These, which are new provisions, comprise lending or borrowing any horse or vehicle for the purpose of conveying voters to the poll, except in the case of persons hiring for themselves; procuring the withdrawal of a candidate by payment, or withdrawing in consideration of payment; purchasing or hiring bands, torches, flags, or ribands; and engaging anyone to perform for payment any service not expressly permitted by the Act. To engage a committee-room in any licensed house, or where refreshments are sold and consumed, or in any public elementary school, will also constitute the same offence, to which is attached, on summary conviction, a penalty of £100; and if the person committing the offence be a candidate or an agent, he will also be guilty of an illegal practice. Having thus defined the various species of corruption at considerable length, and with great care, the Act provides (sect. 22) for excusing such offences in certain cases. Thus, when a candidate is guilty by his agents of certain corrupt and illegal practices, and it

is proved that the offences were committed contrary to the orders of the candidate, and without his sanction or connivance, or that of his election agent; that he or his election agent took all reasonable means to prevent the commission of such offences; that they were of a trivial, unimportant, and limited character; and that in all other respects the election was free from any corrupt or illegal practice, the election will not be void, nor will the candidate be subject to any incapacity. The High Court and an Election Court are also empowered to except any innocent act from being an illegal practice, etc., and to exonerate the candidate or any other person from the consequences thereof, if it shall appear after notice, that the illegal act arose from inadvertence, and not from any want of good faith.

The next part of the Act, commencing with section 24, deals with election expenses, which are most minutely and elaborately treated, and the election agent, who is required to be appointed by the candidate on or before the nomination day, will take a prominent position, and incur great responsibility in connection with the expenditure of money. One election agent only is to be appointed. He may appoint as many sub-agents to act in different polling districts as may be required; but the number must be in proportion to the size of the constituency, and in accordance with very stringent regulations which are laid down in one of the schedules of the Act. All contracts and all payments are to be made through the election agent, and no advance may be made by, or on behalf of, a candidate except through the same officer. Claims against a candidate are to be sent in to the election agent within a fortnight of the election, and all accounts are to be paid by him within four weeks from the election. Payment of any claim after that period will constitute an illegal practice. The personal expenses of a candidate may be paid by himself to the extent of £100, but any sum beyond that must be paid through the election agent. Within 35 days after the day on which the return is made, the election agent is to transmit to the returning-officer a true statement of all the expenses incurred, which is to be accompanied by a declaration by the agent verifying the statement. A similar declaration must also be made and sent by the candidate, within a week