

Minister and the hon. member for Pictou (Mr. Tupper), this question must be left to the courts, and not dealt with by the House or by one of its committees. Let it be remembered, however, that we are responsible to our constituents for the votes we are about to give. I am about to cast a vote on this question, and I am responsible to them, and I claim to be able to judge respecting any question brought before Parliament. I shall be able to say this case was this: An election was held in Queen's county; nominations were received by the returning officer; both nominations were received; the necessary deposits were paid in; receipts were given; both names were accepted and were mentioned on bills printed by the returning officer, the name of Mr. King being printed as well as that of Mr. Baird; polls were opened throughout the different portions of the county; voters came and recorded their votes; ballots were returned and it was found that by a majority of 61 the voters of the electoral division declared Mr. King to be the candidate of their choice. That having been done, there was a legal quibble raised as to whether the deposit was paid in by the proper party, although a receipt was given; and this House deprived the candidate possessing a majority of votes, of a seat, while the minority candidate was given the seat. I shall tell my constituents that when the question came up there was a resolution moved to amend the writ by inserting the name of the majority candidate, a proposition that will commend itself to every honest man in the country, to whatever political party he belongs, and I am willing, having done that, to assume the responsibility as a layman to run all the risks of explaining to my constituents that I voted for it, and I am not afraid they will rebuke me for the position I have taken. There are not two sides to this case. There is not any question for argument; justice must be done first. Give the seat to the man elected, and then if the courts have to come into operation, let them do so in the regular manner. But this whole proceeding is discouraging to a lover of this country. All the movements that occurred during the last general elections are enough to make Canadians blush; taking power into the hands of the Government to appoint their own returning officers, coupled with their conduct as it has been revealed by the Franchise, Gerrymander and other Acts, trying to stifle "the free expression of the people's will;" all are discouraging to Canadians who desire in this country, no matter what political differences exist, that we shall recognise the fact that we believe in constitutional government and the right of the majority to rule. It is not for the members on the other side of this House to attack as to partisanship on this occasion. I desire to judge this question in a judicial spirit. I think we are so acting; but there is such a thing as honest indignation, when injustice is attempted to be perpetrated and wrong to be consummated simply because there is a majority in the House of Government followers. Is it too much to hope that those hon. gentlemen opposite who have been guilty of precisely the same irregularities as in the case of Queen's county will hesitate before they pronounce that the majority candidate in Queen's county is to be deprived of his seat, and that they will refuse him justice, while they themselves are suffering under the precisely same disqualification? This applies, I understand, to the two members for the city and to others. Hon. gentlemen opposite will each know for himself whether he is in that position or not. All the facts may not be known for some time, but when they come to light, and it appears that they have been guilty of the same irregularity as is alleged in the present case, and that they nevertheless voted to seat the minority candidate, it will be a sight for the country to behold and a subject for their constituents to consider. I feel somewhat strongly upon this matter. I do not now feel so, simply because a member of the Opposition happens to be involved in the case, although I have a strong personal friendship for the hon. gentleman deprived of

his seat. But I am cognisant of the fact that the Government possesses a majority, and that a change of one or two votes is not going to affect it. If I looked at this question purely from a party standpoint, I might consider that it would be an advantage to us for hon. gentlemen opposite in the face of these plain facts presented before us, facts that are incontrovertible and which no amount of legal quibble can remove, to allow them to perpetrate and consummate this outrage against the liberties of the people and leave the country to judge with respect to it. The country had a shock last year, when the First Minister hid himself to East York and standing on a public platform, as I understand from a newspaper report, used the very fact of the physical inability of one of the grandest members of this House, the fact that in the service of his country he had so broken down his health that his once powerful voice could be no longer heard in this Parliament—standing on a public platform he urged that as a reason why the electors in that county should reject Mr. Mackenzie and elect Alfred Boulton. Well, Sir, there are things which transpire in the heat of election conflicts which we may be sorry for afterwards, but it seems to me that, in the case of an hon. gentleman whom Conservative members in common with Reform members, have acknowledged to be one of the most honorable, honest and able men in Canadian public life, it would have been a generous thing—there would have been something of the spirit of chivalry in the act—if the First Minister could have abstained from going there or, if he must go there, abstained at least from urging that gentleman's physical disabilities as a reason for his being rejected in favor of Mr. Alfred Boulton. They talk about maintaining good feeling among our public men; but I ask them to put themselves in the places of the Opposition; let them put themselves in our place with a gerrymander forced upon us which lost us many ridings; let them put themselves in our place when they attempted their very best by an Act of Parliament to legislate men out of this House—sitting there as they do with a majority largely procured in this way; let them put themselves in the place of the Opposition who, weighed down as they were, and without whining accepted the position, and determined that they would rely only on a desire to maintain, as far as they can, the principles they believe are correct, and to urge the carrying out of those principles. We are here for that purpose. We seek no party triumph in this matter, but I rejoice to say that in this case I believe every member of the Liberal party will be found on the side of justice, on the side of the people in their desire to exercise their constitutional right of saying who shall be the member to represent them in this House.

Mr. SPROULE. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat has given us the very best evidence of the necessity for sending this question to some other tribunal than before the members of this House. Hon. gentlemen may convert this debate into levity; they may convert it into a subject of mirth, but I do not think the warmth displayed and the epithets employed by them are any evidence that the members who would judge this case if it were left to the House would judge it otherwise than partially. The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Paterson) has given us another exhibition of what I might almost call the hydrophobic attacks of political rancor which were displayed by him and others in the course of the heated debates over the Franchise Bill; and ever since that time, whenever that name is mentioned, there appears to be something in it which arouses their spirit of antagonism and vindictiveness, and the display of something which is not consistent with a calm, judicial consideration of any question like this. I would ask in the first place for what purpose does this House appoint a Committee on Privileges and Elections at the commencement of every Session? Is it expected when the committee is