

April 21, 1874

had the United States departed from the principle, and in no instance was any Local Legislature known to be guilty of that which the hon. gentleman charged upon the Local Government of his own Province. To be sure the tendency in the States had been to make the franchise more free and unrestricted than in this country, but the principle had been adhered to all the same.

To the experience of that great country we were quite entitled to look, and it would meet such objections as were raised by the hon. member for Cumberland. He pointed out that in this country there were very great differences in the employment and pursuit of the people; there were consequently very great differences in what constituted their wealth. In the hon. gentleman's own Province the people were largely sea-faring, and their property was principally on the sea, and not on land. The real property qualification which would work in that Province would not apply at all in Ontario where real estate formed the principal element of the people's wealth. The hon. gentleman did not think it of very great consequence what the qualifications in British Columbia and Manitoba should be. He (Hon. Mr. Blake) hoped the hon. members from these Provinces would note the compliment paid them.

**Hon. Mr. TUPPER:** I did not say that it was of slight consequence. I said these Provinces might be made an exception.

**Hon. Mr. BLAKE** pointed to the inconsistency of the statement even as corrected. Did the hon. gentleman mean to tell the hon. members for these Provinces that they were going thus to be degraded, that they were to represent constituencies where the qualification was less than in the rest of the Dominion and that they were to be set apart from the rest of the members and that they must get a little pin for them? (*Cheers and laughter.*) Why should one man's feelings be branded by being denied election on the grand principle of an equal franchise? (*Hear, hear.*)

He (Hon. Mr. Blake) had visited some thirteen counties during the late election, taking occasion to state to the electors in them all about this matter, and instead of there being any objection to the principle he believe it commended itself not only the good sense of the Province of Ontario, but also the good sense of the House. (*Cheers.*) The hon. member for Cumberland would therefore have to trust himself to the tender mercies of his own Province, if he were going again to be elected to this Chamber.

He ridiculed the idea of appointing the Sheriff returning officer by statute being any violation of the principle of responsible Government, and pointed to the outrageous conduct of the Returning Officer in the Peterborough and Muskoka cases in 1872 as instances of the results which might be expected from the system formerly proposed by the hon. gentleman and his friends when in power, and now advocated by him so strongly. He was opposed to giving any Government whatever the power to influence an election to the extent which they could obtain by having in their hands the appointment of the Returning officers. Although he had as much confidence in his friends of the present Administration as it was possible for him to have in any Government, he was opposed to the principle, and he did not desire to see even in their hands this power.

He, therefore, supported the proposition of the Government most cordially. He quite admitted that if officers who were in a position of permanency of a non-political character could be found to do the duties of returning officers it would be better, but they had no such officers. He had had considerable experience of Government-appointed Returning officers himself, and on the whole had not much to complain of, although they did not always act exactly as he could have desired. He denied Hon. Mr. Tupper's assertion that there had been any abuse of the old law by the present Government, and pointed out the scandalous manner in which the Government of the Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald had manipulated the election under the power it gave them, pointing out especially that the Nova Scotia elections in 1872 were kept back until the Government had gained almost every constituency which supported them in Ontario.

**Hon. Mr. TUPPER** said that these elections were not much later than the others.

**Hon. Mr. MACKENZIE** said that the first return in the West in 1872 was on the 26th of July and that the first return in Nova Scotia was on the 8th of August. The same proportion was maintained as in the last election.

**Hon. Mr. BLAKE** said that one thing more he remembered about the Nova Scotia elections was that they terminated in 1867 as they did in 1874 in one important particular—they sent the hon. member for Cumberland back to Ottawa alone, and he (Hon. Mr. Blake) was not surprised that the hon. gentleman found himself a little sore over the result of the elections in 1874, as he did over the result in 1867.

Why were the Nova Scotia elections delayed on this occasion? In the first place, it was found that by law they must take place simultaneously, so that a certain time must be given for the despatch of the writs to the most remote part of the Province. It was also found that elections must take place in all the Maritime Provinces at the same time, and there was a delay, until the writs could be sent to them. It was impossible to have the elections entirely simultaneously throughout the whole of the Dominion, and so they were pushed on, as well in the inland as in the Maritime Provinces, as quickly as possible; but it happened that the elections in Nova Scotia were a week behind what they were in the other Provinces—not weeks, as formerly.

It was to be remembered that when one of his (Hon. Mr. Blake's) hon. friends proposed to this House a few years ago, not simultaneous polling for the whole Dominion, but that the polling should be simultaneous in every Province, the then Government opposed it. Mail communication had been improved since that time, and more extended provision could now be made with reference to simultaneous polling; and it came with the worst possible grace from the hon. gentleman, who gave such a picture of the power they retained and insisted on retaining—(Hon. Mr. Tupper: No)—yes, insisted on retaining, for their votes are recorded in that sense.

**Hon. Mr. TUPPER:** What does the hon. gentleman say to his own colleagues, who voted with us on principle?

**Hon. Mr. BLAKE:** Sir, I have no colleagues. (*Hear, hear, and laughter.*) With reference to the nominations, his (Hon.