

compel people to come to the polls, whether they vote or not, no good, from the standpoint of purity, will be accomplished by it. It seems to me, if anything is to be accomplished, the principle of compulsion should be carried further, and the voters not only be compelled to go to the polls, but also to cast their ballots. I cannot see—leaving out of the question the propriety of adopting the principle of compulsory voting at all—what object there can be in forcing people to come to the polls and then saying it makes very little difference whether they cast their ballots or not; and certainly I do not see what there is to be gained, from the standpoint of purity of elections.

Mr. AMYOT. The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat says that the religious scruples of some electors prevent them from voting. In that case all they would have to do is to avail themselves of the clause of the Bill, which allows them to have their names erased from the voters' list. They could thus either adopt this means and avoid going to the poll at all, or save equally their fifty dollars cash and secure their eternal salvation by going to the poll and then abstaining from voting. The hon. gentleman says if the present law is ineffective, how can we expect the proposed law to be effective? The answer to that objection is that the sanction of the proposed law is very severe. If a man who makes default of going to the poll to vote is to be deprived of his right to vote during five years, or be condemned to pay a fine, he will no doubt not fail to do his duty as a citizen. This is, however, a matter of detail. The question involved at the present stage is the principle of the Bill. Is it right or wrong to compel the attendance of an elector at the poll? Some hon. gentlemen contend that to do so would be to interfere with his liberty. But we force a man to attend court as a witness or as a jurymen and keep him in court away from his business, for fifteen or twenty days or even a month if necessary, or even a year, and this is, no doubt, an infringement on the liberty of the subject. But each individual is bound to make personal sacrifices for the general good of society. The question for us to consider is, can we do away with the corruption that now exists by making the attendance at the polls compulsory? I am very grateful to the Minister of Justice for having given his attention to the matter, and I accept his suggestion. I hope every member of this House and every citizen in the country will look into the question involved, and see whether, if it does seem to curtail the liberty of the subject, the sacrifice is not one which every one should be prepared to make in order to obtain purity in elections. The hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule) sees nothing at all in the Bill, and prefers going on with the present system. He could not have heard the hon. member for Halifax tell him that in the last election there was not one rural division in which teams were not hired to carry the electors to the polls. Does he owe his election to bribery and corruption?

Mr. SPROULE. No; I deny that.

Mr. AMYOT. I have too much respect for the hon. gentleman to believe that he has calumniated himself, or he does not wish, like us, to be returned by electors who have voted from patriotic motives and have not been bribed or corrupted. I am sure, if the hon. gentleman will look over the Bill, he

Mr. HAZEN.

will find that the only objection to it will be that it comes from this side of the House. I accept the suggestion of the hon. Minister of Justice. If we agree upon the principle that we should make attendance at the polls compulsory, I will be satisfied, as I do not pretend to have a perfect Bill. I do not pretend that this Bill is perfect, and I will be most happy to receive any suggestion or to hand over the Bill entirely to any hon. gentleman who may be more competent to deal with the details than I am. I only desire to give the House an occasion to express its opinion upon the principle of the Bill, and if the principle be found good, I hope we will unite our efforts to make it the law of the country as soon as possible. No doubt it is a radical change, but, when the evil is radical as it is now, it requires a radical cure.

Amendment (Sir John Thompson) agreed to, and debate adjourned.

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the Chair.

After Recess.

ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr. BARRON moved second reading of Bill (No. 54) further to amend the Dominion Elections Act. He said: The first section of this Bill proposes to define beyond any possible doubt the nature of the money which is to be paid into the office of the clerk of the county court whenever a candidate requires to have a recount. The Bill has been suggested to me by reason of recent occurrences in the south riding of the County of Victoria. A recount was demanded there, and the \$100 required to be deposited by the 64th section of the Act I propose to amend was paid in to the clerk, not in money, but by a cheque. The gentleman who paid the money thought he was sufficiently protected by getting the receipt of the clerk in the language of the statute. However, his Honour the judge of the county court thought differently, and it was considered by many that the ends of justice were defeated by a recount not being had. The county court judge gave a long judgment on the subject, and I think the concensus of opinion was with him. He held that the deposit of the gentleman who applied for a recount was not a deposit according to the language of the statute. The statute says: "One hundred dollars." The learned judge held that that should be in legal tender. I ask the House to say in this Bill, in order to prevent any question, that it shall be either in legal tender or in bills of any chartered bank doing business in Canada. The second clause is intended to afford means to compel a county court judge, at the instance of a dissatisfied party, to hold a recount. At present, if a judge of a county court declines to go on with a recount, a mandamus will not lie from a superior court to compel him to go on, and thus again the ends of justice may be defeated. I would refer the House, and the Minister of Justice especially, to the Centre Wellington case, reported in 44 U.C.Q.B. Reports. This is a portion of the decision given by Chief Justice Hagarty on that subject:

"I am satisfied that there is no jurisdiction in this court to interfere in the manner proposed."

The manner proposed was to issue a mandamus to compel the junior judge of the County of