

March 6, 1873

by bribery or any other corrupt practices, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against all such persons as shall have been wilfully concerned in such bribery or other corrupt practices; that the offer of any money or other advantages to any member of the House of Commons for the promoting of any matter whatever depending or to be transacted in the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada is a high crime and misdemeanour, and tends to the subversion of the Constitution.—Carried.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD gave notice that on Monday he would move that a Special Committee be appointed to strike the Standing Committees.—Carried.

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DISPUTED SEATS

After these formal motions were disposed of,—

Hon. Mr. BLAKE said that before the adjournment of the House was moved he desired to call the attention of the House to certain questions of privilege. The object of his motion was simply to order the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery to appear before the House with poll books of certain elections. It was unnecessary and probably would be inconvenient that he should enter into details on the subject, or raise a discussion until the information in reference to these returns was before the House.

There was one return for the electoral district of Muskoka, which he had reason to believe was a special return, in respect of which the returning officer had declared, for certain reasons which he would not at present characterize, his inability to return any member elected for that district, although one candidate received a very large majority of the votes over the other, and that candidate was now in attendance without the bar, waiting to be admitted.

With reference to another election, that is Peterborough West, the returning officer for reasons also which he would not now characterize, had taken on himself to return as duly elected to this House a gentleman who did not receive a majority of votes, and that gentleman had taken or had a right to take his seat, while the gentleman who had the majority of votes is excluded, but was here waiting to be admitted.

There was a third case, of the electoral district of Renfrew South, in reference to which he took the responsibility of stating, from the information he had received, that the poll books would disclose the commission of very gross frauds with respect to the townships of Hagarty and Sherwood. He therefore moved, seconded by Hon. Mr. Holton that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery attend the House forthwith, with the returns of the last election for the electoral districts of Muskoka, Peterborough West, and Renfrew South, together with the poll books and all other papers, letters and documents which may have been transmitted to him by the returning officers for the said districts. He observed that he thought

it his duty to inform the Clerk that such a motion would be made, in order that he might be prepared to attend to the order of the House.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD said that the hon. gentleman having made this a matter of privilege, the motion of course could pass, and the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery would attend with the returns in question in order that they might be laid before the House.

The motion was then carried.

Mr. SCATCHERD moved that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery attend this House forthwith with returns for the electoral district of Middlesex East, together with the poll books and all other papers, letters, and documents which may have been transmitted to him by the returning officer of the said district.—Carried.

The Sergeant-at-Arms retired, and returned with Mr. E. Langevin, Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, who handed to the Clerk of the House the documents referred to, according to the order of the House.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE then said that, these papers being now in the possession of the House, he desired to inform the House that he would, at the earliest opportunity tomorrow, move resolutions amending the returns for Muskoka and Peterborough West so that the candidates who received the majority of votes shall be declared duly elected, subject to the rights of all parties to petition.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: Will this motion precede the Address?

Hon. Mr. BLAKE: Yes, at the earliest moment tomorrow.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: Then I presume that the returns, not of course including the poll books, will appear on the votes and proceedings of today, so that every member of the House may have an opportunity of reading them.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE: I move that the returns be read in each case.

Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: They may be taken as read.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE: The motion is a mere formal one, the object being to put the returns on the votes and proceedings. The reading can be dispensed with.

The motion was carried and the reading was dispensed with.

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LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the librarian of Parliament.

On the motion of **Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD** the House adjourned a few minutes after four o'clock.