

Mr. CASGRAIN. It was probably due to the fact that the ballot was then new, whilst in 1887 and 1891, the ballots were the same as those that had been in use for some time. We can discuss that, however, more at length in committee.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I give the statistics to show that the ballot was not perfect by any means since it led to such results.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. I do not consider it perfect, but better than the one proposed in this measure.

Mr. C. E. KAULBACH (Lunenburg). I consider this, Mr. Speaker, an opportune time, whilst this Election Bill is being submitted to the House for a second reading, to bring up the subject of the penalties that should be inflicted on election officers who have wilfully violated their duties at elections. I agree with what the hon. leader of the opposition has said with respect to the punishments that should be inflicted. In the last local election in the county I represent, the sheriff was the returning officer, and, as was alleged, was guilty of such conduct in his position as returning officer as to make him an object of reproach by nearly every elector in that county, irrespective of party. I brought it to the notice of this House, on the first opportunity that offered, together with the facts connected with that election, of certain corrupt practices that had been perpetuated. The two candidates were the late mayor of the town and a cabinet minister in the local government. At the close of the poll, it was found that the cabinet minister had been defeated by seventeen votes, but the cry went forth in every quarter that the party supporting the cabinet minister did not care a damn what might happen, as the cabinet minister was bound to be returned anyhow. It became evident to the friends of the late mayor, Captain Wolfe, that a recount would be demanded; and so it was, and in that recount the ballots were so manipulated that instead of a majority of seventeen in favour of Captain Wolfe, the majority was turned the other way. I brought the matter to the notice of this House, and showed the iniquity that was alleged to have been committed by the sheriff, acting as returning officer, and asked for an investigation. I was advised that I had better allow the elections in other counties, in which frauds were committed, to be investigated first. However, I brought the matter to the notice of this government, and contended that it was the duty of this government to investigate it, and if it were found that this sheriff was not worthy of the position he occupied, he should be removed from office at once. All my representations and demands, however, fell unheeded, and this same man is still in office, who is capable of doing almost anything, provided he can see some hole through which he may escape conviction. He will,

Mr. FITZPATRICK.

no doubt, be the returning officer at the next election, and, no doubt, will submit the candidate to whom he is opposed to similar treatment.

I appeal to the government not to reappoint that sheriff as returning officer without first having the charges referred to against him fully investigated. I look upon the conduct of the sheriff as worse than robbery. To deprive a man of his franchise is bad enough, but to rob the electorate of the county and the elected candidate of his right to a county seat is still a worse act, and one that should be met with swift condign punishment. I earnestly solicit the government to investigate the matter. I might give to the House charges which have been brought against this man previously, but, no doubt, I would be ruled out of order in doing so; but, I feel that the government have been remiss in their duty in not bringing this party to justice when they knew the charges that had been brought against him, not only by me in this Chamber, but also some years ago in the Senate by a member of that body. I now repeat my request that the government should not appoint this man again returning officer, but should see that his conduct is investigated first before giving him any further position of trust.

Mr. FLINT. I would like to ask my hon. friend if the protest was not withdrawn, and why it was?

Mr. KAULBACH. There was a protest, but the position in which I was placed—or the party was placed—in connection with that protest, was one that does not reflect a great deal of credit upon the government now in power. I think the hon. member for Yarmouth (Mr. Flint) is aware of the fact; and if he will explain the facts to the House I think they will see very clearly that he had better not have asked that question.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE (Mr. Fielding). Perhaps, the most of the members of the House would like to know as much about it as the hon. member for Lunenburg (Mr. Kaulbach), and the hon. member for Yarmouth (Mr. Flint). I have not the good fortune to know anything about the facts of the case, but I understand the hon. gentleman (Mr. Kaulbach) is dealing with something that occurred in regard to a recount in a local election. Now, the province of Nova Scotia is one of the most civilized portions of the Dominion, and if any officer engaged in a local election has misbehaved, there is ample machinery in the courts of the country to deal with him; and, if there should be any lack in the local machinery, we have a local government and a local legislature that will deal with the matter. I cannot see what object the hon. gentleman has in dragging in a question of local politics here. If he has a difficulty with the sheriff of the county, I have no doubt that he can find a way to settle that difficulty without asking us to intervene. I