

the Judges to decide. By adopting this course, any amount of legal expenses would be incurred, together with no end of trouble. No time should be lost in making the law plain. If he was not mistaken, the matter was decided the other day in the Supreme Court, when the opinion was expressed that, unless it was shown that there had been an improper intention, an election should not be vitiated. He had looked at the Statute since then, and he considered it extremely doubtful whether that view could be carried out or not.

MR. BLAKE said that an election was not vitiated unless hospitality was given, on account of an elector having voted or being about to vote.

MR. PALMER said, in that case, the first part of the section quoted by his hon. friend from Cardwell was entirely unnecessary; if it was allowed to remain, Judges would give different decisions. The law should be made perfectly explicit; and he hoped the Minister of Justice would give the the matter his consideration.

Bill, as amended, *ordered to be reported.*

House resumed.

Bill reported.

Amendments read the first and second times and agreed to.

#### NATIVE TOBACCO DUTIES.

##### RESOLUTION PROPOSED.

Order for Mr. Speaker to leave the Chair for the House to go again into Committee of Supply, *read.*

MR. BOLDUC said that he desired to call the attention of the hon. members of this House to the fact that the cultivation of tobacco would flourish in this country, if it were encouraged. At present, the cultivation of tobacco in Canada, owing to the heavy excise duty, was practically prohibited. The duty amounted to 20c. a pound. Indeed, if the law was made prohibitory, it would not be more severe than the law which existed. No Canadian manufacturer could now buy Canadian tobacco unless he paid a duty of 20c. a pound on it; and, owing to this state of things, the cultivation of tobacco was

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not encouraged, and the farmer was not able properly to acquire the experience which would enable him to raise tobacco of the first quality. This question was so much more important, in view of the fact that we imported a great quantity of tobacco yearly. Glancing over the Trade and Navigation Returns, he perceived that in 1874 we imported 6,869,000 lbs., for which were paid \$786,216; in 1875 we imported 10,396,741 lbs., for which \$968,613 were paid; in 1876 we imported 10,301,733 lbs., for which \$1,154,049 were paid; and in 1877 we imported 8,665,879 lbs., for which were paid \$901,686; in all there were about four millions of dollars which we had been obliged to pay for the purchase of this leaf alone abroad. This amount would be kept in this country if, instead of prohibiting the cultivation of this article, the Government encouraged it. The success already met with in the cultivation of the tobacco plant in this country proved that it could be raised to great advantage, if such encouragement was given. He did not ask for the abolition of the Excise duty for a long time, but merely for such period as would be advantageous to the farmers, and as would enable the farmers to become accustomed to the cultivation of this article. He did not ask the Government to abandon for ever this source of revenue, for among all dutiable objects he recognized the fact that tobacco, from its very nature, was one on which a duty could very properly be levied. But, having regard to the interest of the agricultural portion of the population, he thought that at the present juncture, the Government should encourage the cultivation of tobacco. The hon. the Minister of Finance, in his Budget speech, delivered during the present Session, had said:—

“Those who have studied the position of this country are well aware that, however important other interests may be, now and for a long time to come the agricultural interest will necessarily continue to be the predominant interest in Canada; and, therefore, anything which strikes at the prosperity of the agricultural population strikes necessarily at all those classes, those very numerous classes, which are dependent upon them.”