

interference with the rights of the people, and believed they should exercise the privilege of electing men to both Legislatures; for he believed there would be many cases where such a provision would be beneficial to the public interests. The present Bill went still further than the law of Ontario, and limited the selection of a candidate by a constituency. If a constituency favored a particular candidate for the House of Commons, he could be elected under the law of Ontario as it now stands, but if the Bill was passed then he must first resign his seat in the Ontario Legislature. If he was not returned, then the country would lose the benefit of his services altogether.

Hon. Mr. McMASTER said that the Government repudiated all connection with the Bill, but it was a remarkable fact that the gentleman who proposed the same measure last year was opposed by them, while this session they pursued an entirely different course. The warmth displayed by members of the Government in discussing the question showed how much interest they took in the matter. It would be remembered that the late Premier of Ontario strongly opposed the rejection of the principle of dual representation, but public opinion became so strong at last that he was forced to yield to the extent of providing that the members of the Local Government should not be elected to seats in the Dominion Parliament. When the present Premier of Ontario came into power he brought in a measure stipulating that dual representation should be abolished, but it was not to go into operation until the new Parliament was elected. Under that Bill no member of the Local Legislature, whether connected with the Government or not, could sit in the Commons, but until Parliament met the members of the Local Government could retain their seats in the Local Legislature—they might remain there for one session, in fact. Now the present bill set aside that act, and he would not vote for it inasmuch as it was, in his opinion, a most unwarrantable interference with the rights of the Local Legislatures.

Hon. Mr. BUREAU only wished to add a few remarks to show the imperfections of the Bill. The provision giving power to the returning officer was without precedent, and must have the most injurious results. Power was given to that officer to decide, without appeal, if a candidate is eligible or not in the sense of the bill. The first section stated that no person shall be eligible to or capable of being nominated for the House of Commons; if on the day of nomination he is a

member of the Legislative Council or Assembly of any Province where dual representation has been abolished. Now suppose a member of one of these Local Legislatures should place his resignation in the hands of the Speaker, as is the custom, in order to qualify himself to appear as a candidate for the Federal Parliament, and suppose the Returning Officer thought proper to ignore or pretend to ignore such a resignation. Would it not be possible for an unscrupulous Returning Officer to deny the authenticity or legality of this resignation? The experience of the past ought to put us on our guard. What authority was proposed to regulate the dispute between the Returning Officer and the candidate in question? On a matter of such grave moment it was not even proposed to allow the same protection which the humblest person was able to demand at the hands of the tribunals of the Dominion. Yet the Government were willing to assume the responsibility of such dangerous legislation. In fact, if we examined the arbitrary provisions of the bill, with the Act providing for the independence of Parliament, any one must be convinced of the truth of his assertions. The Act set forth that no one shall be eligible or shall take his seat or vote, if he shall be disqualified according to the Act. These were also the same terms used by the Legislature of Ontario during its last session. Is the Returning Officer, in either case, constituted the sole judge. No. Yet the Government on the eve of a general election supported a measure so novel and impolitic. The Hon. Postmaster General had said the bill would save expense, but that was an error; for should it happen that the returning officers should be summoned to the bar of the Chamber, every day devoted to the necessary enquiry would entail a heavy expense, and retard the progress of legislation. In whatever light he considered the Bill, he saw reason to regret that it was introduced; but in any case it ought to be amended so as to take away from the returning officer a power which ought only to be exercised by the Legislature or the regularly constituted tribunals for the trial of contested elections.

Hon. Mr. WALK objected to the power given to the returning officer as extraordinary, and likely to lead to abuses. He wished to see our legislation of universal application, not partial in its operations, as would be the case with the present measure should it become law. He was not opposed to dual representation, and had always entertained the same opinion.