

it was on the increase. It had become a serious question with honest people in this country how long popular government could be maintained if corruption were further continued. The attention of those had been directed to it who are interested in the elevation of the people, in the purity of the people, and who desire to avoid that increasing demoralization which results from the sale of the franchise. Attention had also been directed to this subject in the old country, and means have been tested and found satisfactory for reducing to a minimum those evils.

The hon. gentleman, so far from being an optimist, has become an Oppositionist. He believes that this expenditure at elections always has existed and always will exist. He abandons in despair the hope of seeing a fair and pure election. Sir, I do not abandon that hope. (*Cheers.*) If I did, I would despair of the Republic. But the truth is the hon. gentleman's tactics were of the other description.

We had tried the effect of another law upon this matter. It had been tried under his eyes. He witnessed the effect of it in the Province of Ontario. I say—and I can speak with as much knowledge as any other man in this country upon this subject—I say that while the election in Ontario in 1867 was a corrupt one, the election in 1871 was the purest that had been known in the last 25 years (*cheers*); and I say that that enormous change was produced by a proper election law, and by a course being adopted which I have always recommended privately and in public, which, I believe is the only course upon which any party fairly ought to succeed, and I hope any course upon which any party will succeed, viz, that having a law which will enable you to punish bribery and corruption, you keep your own hands altogether clean, and expend whatever money you choose to expend for electioneering purposes, in searching, repressing, and punishing corrupt acts on the part of your opponents. Appeal to the courts, let your expenses be in the courts. Let the courts try the case, and if the election of your opponent has not been pure, he must suffer from the consequences of this corruption. That was the principle upon which the election of 1871 was carried, and that way the principle upon which the election of 1872 would have been run had the hon. gentleman permitted it.

But, Sir, although the hon. gentleman affirmed solemnly to this House that the Election Committees were a good tribunal, and though he induced this House so far to believe it as to leave that tribunal to be the only one for the trial of elections, yet the hon. gentleman in his evidence has told us—and I know of no case in which a public man has been so completely and unequivocally condemned out of his own mouth—he has told us in his evidence that corrupt and illegal expenditure, expenditure made unlawful by the laws for which he is chiefly responsible, had existed, and would continue to exist, because the tribunal itself was such as could not be expected to be effective. He said that the expenditure for hiring teams and for entertainments was illegal, and yet was universal. According to the hon. gentleman's reasoning, everybody did it, and he would not expect that five members, each of whom had treated

and hired teams, would judge the seat of another member void because he had treated and hired teams.

That was the character of the tribunal which the hon. gentleman imposed upon this country in the late elections. Upon page 119 of the evidence, where one of his colleagues was cross-examining him, the First Minister testified that he believed the practice of hiring teams and treating was universal, and that he had never known of any serious contest before the election Committee on the ground of such expenditure. The hon. gentleman tells us that he had 40 years' experience in elections, and he had found that tribunal so utterly ineffective, that the law upon the statute book which declared this system of hiring teams to be illegal, was a dead letter—was violated with impunity. And yet the hon. gentleman declined to change that law, and declared it to be a good law by refusing to us the trial by judges.

How does it, may I ask, lie in the hon. gentleman's mouth to say he was forced into a large expenditure, in these elections? (*Hear, hear.*) If there was a large expenditure, he forced it. He caused it by tried means—first by insisting upon retaining the law which he acknowledged to be utterly ineffective, and secondly, by bringing forward these funds from Allan, which, I suppose, were put with other funds I do not know anything about it. I was absent from the country at the time. I spent no money, and I was elected in spite of the opposition of the hon. gentleman; but if there was a large expenditure, he is the last man in this country—he who arranged at an early period for expenditure of that money—he is the last man to complain pitifully, and say, "I was forced into spending money at elections which I would not otherwise have done." (*Cheers.*)

Why, Sir, the hon. gentleman, at the commencement of last session was so impressed with the importance of keeping within the law—of not infringing in any way upon the jurisdiction of the Election Committee, that he would not permit this House to render justice to the people of West Peterborough, that he told the House they must not seat the man temporarily who had the majority of votes, but that the man who was told he had not the confidence of the people should sit and vote, because the only salvation of the House was to leave all these things to Election Committees. The hon. gentleman who then found such virtue in an Election Committee when it was to give him a vote or two, now proposes in his desperation to sweep away all Election Committees and make arrangements for a new Commission of three judges, who are to perambulate the land from Dan to Beersheba, searching out all the inequities that have taken place, and putting the seats of all the members of this House at the disposal of those gentlemen.

I have no objection to as many Commissions as the hon. gentleman pleases to ask for, but I very much doubt whether some highly respectable gentlemen on the other side are ardently desirous of such a Commission. (*Laughter.*) I extremely doubt whether many of these gentlemen feel grateful in their heart of hearts with the hon. gentleman for proposing such a scheme. Well, Sir, when he proposes it we shall discuss it. I have no objection to as many