

again. If the number of voters at that polling booth is known, and a sufficient number of ballot papers are provided for it, then there is no possibility of the ballot papers running short at that booth. At the close of the day's polling, at five o'clock, under section 53 of the present Dominion Election Act, certain things are required of the deputy returning officer and those who attend at that booth. As I have already remarked, according to the way we conduct elections, that section has proved inadequate, and under the new mode I propose to make it practically impossible that any crookedness can be carried on, except at very great risk.

Now, with respect to the recount, we had some difficulty in 1896 in one or two constituencies where Dominion elections were held, owing to the deputy returning officers not doing their duty under the law. I propose an amendment in that respect so that it will not be necessary to deposit \$100 before you can have a recount. I propose to strike that provision out. I cannot see why a candidate who believes that he has been defeated dishonestly and that votes have been counted against him, which ought not to be counted, should be forced to deposit \$100 in order to get justice—and from whom? From a judge who is already paid a very good salary for performing his duty; and the candidate has to pay a returning officer or poll clerk to attend, who may, perhaps, have been doing something which prevented him from winning in the election. So I say there is no necessity why he should be called upon to deposit \$100.

There are several other amendments to the Act. I propose to retain some of the sections and subsections in the present Act, while others I propose to replace by entirely new ones. As to the crimes of personation, plugging, switching, stealing ballots and ballot boxes, stuffing, bribing, intimidating and other such tactics, which are now pretty well known to those who take part in elections, my object is to prevent them occurring in the future so far as possible. I would like to draw the attention of the First Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) to this fact, that in preparing amendments to any Act now on the statute-book it is a very difficult matter even for lawyers, I fancy, and much more so for laymen, to avoid coming into conflict with the various other Acts that are now on our statutes, and for this reason, that since 1886 there has been no consolidation of the Dominion statutes, and I think it is in the interests of the public that such a consolidation should take place, and such consolidation should take place in the near future. I wish to say to the right hon. gentleman that the present law is in a very bad state, that it does not meet the requirements of the people of this country; and I would ask him and all other hon. gentlemen to assist in perfecting that law, so that we may have

on the statute-book an Act that will give satisfaction to the public generally.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

#### REPORT.

Public Accounts for the year ending June 30, 1899.—(Mr. Fielding.)

#### ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

The House proceeded to the consideration of His Excellency's speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. GOULD. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of moving that a humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech from the Throne. I am deeply sensible of the great honour that is conferred upon me and upon my constituents in having been selected to perform this important duty. I feel that, perhaps, it would have been better had this important task been placed in other and better hands—in the hands of one who had more experience in federal politics. However, I feel assured that I shall receive from the members of this House that same kind consideration and indulgence that they have ever shown to new members who have found themselves placed in the position I find myself placed in to-day. Permit me to refer briefly, before I proceed further, to the sad event that caused the vacancy in the riding of West Ontario, the riding that I have now the honour to represent. For fifteen years the late Sir James Edgar was the esteemed representative of that riding. His services to his country and to his party can scarcely be overestimated. He was a true, noble Canadian in the very best sense of the term, and was ever ready, both by voice and pen, to uphold and advance the interests of his country. He was an able statesman and a strong loyalist. The people of West Ontario rejoiced over his elevation to the position he occupied in this House as the First Commoner of the land, a position that he filled with so much credit to himself and to the Parliament of Canada, and I believe, in such a way as to meet with the entire approval of both sides of this House. His passing away was a distinct loss to the nation. The people of West Ontario felt keenly his death, and they sympathize sincerely with Lady Edgar and her family in their great bereavement.

I propose, for a few moments, to refer to the position of our country as we find it now from the commercial point of view. Comparing the present position with that of a few years ago, a complete transformation has taken place. A new Canada has arisen; we seem to be living in a new age; business conditions, political condi-