

to all returning officers or all deputies; but I do say it was lamentable generally throughout the whole of the country, so far as I have been able to ascertain.

Some hon. MEMBERS. No, no. Name, name.

Mr. McCALLUM. Name. Will the hon. gentleman give the name of those returning officers. When the hon. gentleman is slandering lots of people he should give the names.

Mr. BLAKE. Why, Sir, there was a case in which the returning officer was appointed, who was the editor and proprietor of a violent and virulent Tory sheet, in the locality, I believe, where the hon. gentleman belongs, and who felt the inconsistency of his own position so much that he published an announcement after his appointment that from that time until the close of the election, being returning officer, he had ceased to do anything in the editorial columns of his paper.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear,

Mr. McCALLUM. In this he showed his conscientiousness.

Mr. RYKERT. And his honesty.

Mr. BLAKE. It was somebody else who was going to sling ink in the interest of the paper which he controlled; and this, I believe, took place not far from the constituency of the hon. member for Monck. I am not sure that this person was not the Returning Officer for Monck. I thought so, and that is the reason I gave this instance at the hon. gentleman's demand. But it happened, Sir, in many cases the deputies were not supplied with the necessary papers in due time, and this is a most serious point which deserves the attention of the House. The instructions and the duties to be discharged are complicated, and it requires for the intelligent discharge of them, by those who discharge them for the first time, that these papers should be received in time for their perusal and mastery. These papers were, however, frequently received only the night before, and oftentimes at such periods that it was impossible that the deputies could really learn the discharge of their duties before the following day. In very numerous cases the ballot papers were printed on paper so thin that the ballot was a sham; that it was known to be perfectly easy to observe by the impression made in marking the ballot, without unfolding it, how the voter had voted; and I maintain that in numerous elections that the very class of the population for whom the ballot is established were thwarted in the exercise of their franchise by information and suggestions which were there given, and that the ballot did not really protect, because the returning officer could very easily tell, with the folded ballot before him, for whom they had polled their votes. In some cases voters not upon the list were permitted, upon some suggested right, to poll tendered votes; sometimes they were sworn, sometimes not, and their ballots actually counted, though they had no pretence or shadow of pretence for voting. In very many cases the power given to the returning officer to give agents a certificate, in order that they might vote at the poll at which they acted as scrutineers, was grossly abused. It was abused far beyond any legitimate demand; abused by giving certificates in blank, to be used by the agents of the party for whom they were given, and as might be most convenient; abused by giving certificates to persons who were not voters at all, not in order that they might *bona fide* act as agents or scrutineers, but in order that they might poll their votes at some polling place other than their own, where they would have been objected to, but not being known their votes were admitted. In many cases the deputies numbered the ballots; in others they omitted to initial the ballots. In many cases the statements required by law were not placed in the boxes,

and in some cases unsigned statements were placed in them. Lawful oaths were refused to be administered; ballot boxes were opened and the statements in them were changed. Double returns were made; in one case a returning officer returned a man who was not returned by the people, and in another case when the returning officer returned a man who received a majority of votes, the County Judge returned the one who had not received a majority. In the recounts before the County Judges all sorts of decisions took place, and hundreds, nay thousands, of voters were disfranchised by the operation of the law in this particular. There was also a very extensive use of betting under various pretences, but really for corrupt purposes.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. You bet.

Mr. BLAKE. I don't say one side only, but that does not make it the less obnoxious; and there was the use of betting for corrupt purposes and as a form of bribery and corruption, irrespective of the ordinary use of betting at elections, which, when carried on to the extent and in the manner it has been carried on at late elections, is in itself no unimportant engine of undue influence and should, in my opinion, receive the consideration of this House, with a view to its repression. Independently of all these points to which I have referred—and to which I have referred specifically, because the Address invites us to consider an amendment of the law relating to the representation of the people in Parliament—there was a very great deal of corruption which is covered by the existing law, nominally, however ineffectually that law may practically act in the repression of it. Many of those defects in the law had been already ascertained by experience during the late Parliament—by the experience of other Legislatures operating under similar laws, and by the experience of our own; and it seems to me it was incumbent upon the Government—for they were about to dissolve Parliament before the regular period and to precipitate an election—to have invited such legislation before the late election as would have been proper to redress these wrongs, to set aside these difficulties, and to arrange, as far as might be, for the avoidance of those imperfections. But instead of legislating they dissolved. Then as to the trial of controverted elections. In the exercise of its functions the Legislature of Ontario passed a law some time ago by which they altered the style of some of their courts. I apprehend it was the duty of the Administration before dissolving Parliament in advance of the time, to have proposed to us such legislation as would have made clear beyond a doubt the application to the new courts of the jurisdiction which had been given to the old ones, instead of which no such legislation was proposed; the difficulty subsisted, and numerous election petitions are now in suspense. The hon. Minister himself, whom I charge with dereliction of duty in not legislating to avoid this grievance, raises this very objection, and insists that the petition against his return in Lennox should be voided because, forsooth, it has been entered in the wrong court. The Speech says that besides amending the laws otherwise, as to the representation of the people, it is expedient that the franchises in the various Provinces should be assimilated, and both the hon. gentlemen who have spoken have expressed their opinion in favor of that proposition. The proposition is not a new one. The hon. member who now leads the House brought it before us some twelve or thirteen years ago, and brought in a Bill to carry out his views. That Bill, after a tolerably full discussion, was dropped, and from that time to this the subject has never been brought before the people or before Parliament. On the contrary, in the year 1874, an Act was passed of a permanent character—not temporary as preceding Acts had been in form—recognizing the local franchises as the franchises for election to this Parliament. I quite admit that there is something to