DOMINION PARLIAMENT.

(Continued from third page.)

the contract was sub-let to Chubb & Co., so that the profits which went into the pocket of the Speaker went there without his giving any time whatever that required in signing the warrants for the money. (Cheers.) The Premier had stated that it was excessively wrong to employ members of Parliament and give them salaries, the law having so declared it, but if that is wrong, giving contracts is infinitely more dangerous. (Cheers.) That appeal the very foundation of the independence of Parliament. When a man had a fixed salary it was no secret, but when he had a contract he might be making enormous profits as the Government well know——

Mr. MILLS—Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN MACDONALD—Yes, as the Government well know; look at Mr. A. B. Foster. (Loud cheers.) The Government knew very well how to remunerate a friendly contractor, and how, instead of making him forfeit his security when he abandons his contract, to give it him back and make him a present of a great many thousand dollars more. The practice of giving members of Parliament any interest in contracts was infinitely more destructive of the Independence of Parliament than the payment of a salary for certain work. If he (Mr. Mackenzie) would look back to history, he would find that the most effective measures were taken to sweep out these abuses, but it took long before there were vigorous efforts made to protect the elector from corrupting influence, because it was felt that wrong as it might be to corrupt an elector, it was infinitely worse to corrupt a member representing thousands of electors. (Loud cheers.)

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Mr. BLAKE—They were public. They were entered in the Public Accounts.

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Mr. BLAKE said the Government had been charged with corrupting or purchasing a commander-in-chief. He would not say that the hon. member for Kingston had been sincere, as he was certainly warm in his remarks. The member for North Hastings had referred to several of his speeches, and quoted from them. These opinions he held still. He believed it was necessary to dissociate every member of the House from the Government of the day, and he had laboured to make the law such as would render it impossible. It was no crime to give a member an office. Members were appointed as judges and to other positions. The question was whether the law covered the case. In 1868 he (Mr. Blake) had endeavoured to make the law more stringent, but the hon. member for Kingston opposed a change. In 1871, however, he was compelled to admit that the law must be altered. The hon. gentleman had contended that these principles were admirable, but how did these principles contrast with his practice? When the Pacific Railway Company was formed, the then Opposition desired to prevent any member of Parliament from being a member of the Company, but the hon. gentleman said the Company could not succeed without them. His ultimate determination, however, was a compromise. It was decided that none of the original corporators should be members of Parliament, but there was nothing to prevent members from being secret partners in the concern. It was satisfactory to find that conviction had been gradually dawning upon him (Sir John), and that he was now fully persuaded of the correctness of those principles which he had formerly resisted. The hon. gentleman might have brought this matter up before, but he had waited until the moment came when it would be most embarrassing to the Government, and he could say to them "vote that down if you please." He contended that hon. gentlemen opposite could not move a resolution affirming that a breach of the Independence of Parliament Act had been committed without moving to issue a writ on the ground that the seat was vacant. No one who sustained the motion, could refrain from supporting such a proposition. The breach of the Act was in a member continuing to sit in Parliament; therefore the motion really amounted to a complaint that the Speaker continued to fill the chair. He would abstain from expressing any opinion whether this was or was not a contract within the Independence of Parliament Act. (Laughter.) Judgment ought not to be passed on such a question without investigation and inquiry by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections (Laughter.) He would be for no party would anticipate judgment. If it came within the Act the effect was that the seat was vacant, and the penalty for sitting in Parliament was fixed at the modest sum of $2 000 per day. There was nothing in the law which prevented the Government from giving a contract to a member, the latter ceasing *ipso facto* to be a member.

A MEMBER—Then why did you stop it?

Mr. BLAKE—Because we did not think the relation should continue between the Government and a continuing member of Parliament.

Sir JOHN MACDONALD—The offence is one to which a penalty is attached, and the hon. gentleman has said in the House that where there is an offence there must be two, parties to it, the receiver as well as the giver. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. BLAKE did not think if the hon. gentleman murdered him, he (Mr. Blake) would thereby become a criminal. He went on to say that this matter should have been

Messrs. Masson and McMillan next spoke with good effect, Mr. Rymal sandwiching a pettifogger in a Division Court than of the leader of the Opposition.

Sir JOHN MACDONALD—The hon. gentleman had just said that the facts were well known even now. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. BLAKE replied that the fact that a printing job had been given to the Speaker was as well known last session as it was now. He went on to contend that the object of his motion was to declare that the seat for Gloucester was vacant. Disguise it as they might, that was the gist of the motion, and that was a question which ought to be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. The Opposition had allowed a year to elapse before taking action, and as there had been so much deliberation in the inception, it was not proper that there should be haste in action. The Government would not oppose a reference to that Committee.

Mr. BOWELL—Then why don't you move it? (Cheers.)

Mr. BLAKE—Governments do not usually make such motions, and he thought it was unfair to expect a different course from the Government. (Laughter.)

Dr. TUPPER could imagine the derision with which the great mass of the supporters of hon. gentlemen opposite would have received the statement a few years ago that the honest indigenous statesman of the Dominion who had just sat down, exhibited when on the Opposition side of the House, was succeeded by special pleading for one of the grossest breaches of the privileges of Parliament which had ever been perpetrated. (Cheers.) The hon. gentlemen whose feelings cheers had been heard attempting to sustain the case, because it was felt that wrong as it might be to corrupt an elector, it was infinitely worse to corrupt a member representing thousands of electors. (Loud cheers.)

After recess,

Sir JOHN MACDONALD resumed the debate, pointing out that the Premier had in fact offered no excuse for the action of the Government, and there could be no doubt that the Government had given the case up so far as they were concerned. The Premier objected to the second part of the resolution, but he admitted the first part. The resolution in his (Sir John's) opinion was incontrovertible, alleging as it does the simple fact that such payments were in contradiction of the Independence of Parliament Act. He wished to know if any member could put his hand on his heart and say that the Minister of Justice was not a contravention of the Independence of Parliament Act. That was the only proposition in the resolution, and the House would see by the vote which party was required to support the Independence of Parliament and vindicate it. (Cheers). As regards the conduct of the Government, there could be no doubt of the grave responsibility of the Postmaster-General. He was at the head of the Department and was responsible for it, and he it was who deliberately ordered the contract to be given to political friends, in other words, it must be given to the *Freeman*. There was no means of escape for the Postmaster-General. It appeared that it was early in 1875 that this state of affairs was communicated by the Postmaster-General to his colleagues and from that time they had to share the responsibility because they did not close the contract, as was their duty as soon as it came under notice. There was only one thing for the Premier to do when he was informed of the case, and that was to order the contract to be closed, but what was done? From 1875 until, in fact, this session, the country did not know authoritatively of the matter? The facts came out, as he (Sir John) understood it, before the Public Accounts Committee last session, but they were not reported to the House.

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