

irregularities. The present Government were not responsible for this one, which he hoped would serve as a lesson to it, however.

In reply to some remarks by the Hon. Mr. READ.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER expressed regret that the return with which the Post Office Department was concerned, was not yet before the House. The attention of the Postmaster General had been called to it.

THE ELECTION BILL.

Hon. Mr. LETELLIER said, in introducing this measure, it was one that more particularly concerned the House of Commons, whose views with respect to it should prevail. It should be left entirely to their judgment. Experience had satisfied the present government that it was necessary to have a law applicable to all the Provinces. A General Election Law had been yearly promised since Confederation. It was admitted on all sides that it was necessary to make a change of the law with the object of obtaining elections in a manner more consonant with the views of the people, with honesty and with a desire to furnish that protection against injustice and wrong doing which unquestionably should exist. The system of two days' polling in Quebec and Ontario had led to much bribery and corruption at times, with all their attendant evils, on the ascertainment of the result of the first day's voting. The government hitherto had, moreover, the right of naming the election days, which enabled them to improperly influence the people with false impressions as to their strength in the country, by bringing on the elections likely to prove favourable to them first. The difficulty was to find a remedy for this obnoxious state of things, and the only one that seemed suitable, was simultaneous voting. Ministers were, in this matter, giving up a valuable advantage hitherto used with much effect by parties in power. But the benefits of the simultaneous method, which the government decided to try last general election were made most apparent. Thus members of the government had shown themselves consistent with their professions of many years, while in Opposition, and proved their sincerity beyond doubt. Of course a few exceptions to the rule of simultaneity, were necessarily made in constituencies very remote, and of great extent, such as Algoma. Another important feature of this bill was the qualification of the electors. For his own part, Democratic though it might be, he would have

preferred granting the franchise to every man who might, at any moment, be called upon to take up arms in defence of his country. But, as it was the general opinion that some qualification should be required, it was decided to fix the present franchise. On the other hand, however, there was an end to the pecuniary qualification exacted of the candidate, who was no longer to have the judgment as to his fitness decided by the amount of money in his pocket, but by the brains in his head and by his general character. (Hear, hear.) So property on the one side would be represented by the electors, and intellect, capacity, and honesty by the candidates. As to the qualification for the voters, it would certainly have been difficult to devise a qualification that would have affected equally all the Provinces. To give satisfaction in this respect, and avoid the expenditure of a large sum of money, which legislation by the Dominion would have entailed, the government resolved to take the existing qualification for the electors for the Local Legislatures, which, doubtless, secured all the rights they could claim. But unfortunately an exception had to be made of P. E. Island, the little Province that came into the Union last, but was thought least of. (Hear, hear.) For its Legislative Assembly there was universal suffrage, while for the Legislative Council, a property qualification, which it was thought advisable to adopt for electors for the House of Commons. This was only for the present, however, it being left to the Legislative Assembly, more particularly representing the masses, to lower the franchise as much as they chose at the next meeting of the Legislature. The government of Canada would be ready to accept any action on this matter. Another new feature of the bill was the abolition of the old nomination days, which were of no advantage that he could see, but, on the contrary, proved often the occasions of excitement and regrettable violence. The change need not prevent meetings of the electors before the polling and discussion of public questions. Twenty electors, by a requisition, might hereafter put a man in nomination, the candidate depositing \$50 as an evidence of good faith. The next change he would notice was very important, being designed and calculated to diminish the temptation of the electors and the evils of corruption—the new feature was the ballot, which would go far to prevent undue influence of any kind, and secure honesty in the elections. It looked more manly, he admitted for a person to go forward