

April 28, 1874

On clause 24, allowing candidates to withdraw at any time before the close of the poll, a discussion arose. It was finally carried as it stood.

Clause 25, referring to the hours of polling, was passed without discussion.

On clause 26, relating to the form of the ballot paper,

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT advocated the system in force in Ontario and Great Britain, on the ground that it afforded greater facility for the punishment, if not the prevention, of personation and fraudulent voting. He moved in amendment that each paper shall have a number printed on the back, and shall have attached a counterfoil with the same number on the face of it. He said he moved this as a sort of test question, to ascertain whether the Government or the House would be willing to accede to the system.

Hon. Mr. DORION said the desire of the Government was simply to provide the best system. He quoted from the evidence sent from South Australia to England showing that the system he proposed had worked well there, that there was very little personation or fraudulent voting under it, and that the advocates of the ballot there were unwilling to make any change which would endanger its absolute secrecy. The Government had carefully considered the arguments in favour of both systems, and had concluded to accept that which gave the most perfect and absolute secrecy.

He held that the system adopted in Britain and Upper Canada was as yet untried, and no one knew how it might work, while, on the other hand, this system had been tried in general elections in the colony of Australia and found to work exceedingly well. If the Ontario law were found to work better than that which he proposed, it could be adopted, but in the meantime he thought it better to stand by the proposed system.

Hon. Mr. CAMERON (Cardwell) supported the amendment of Hon. Mr. Abbott.

Mr. RYAN thought there should be provision made for giving redress to a candidate who had suffered from impersonation by voters.

Mr. THOMSON (Welland) said he proposed to vote for every clause in this Bill. The leading feature of the measure was supported on both sides of the House, and as for the various details, they could only know how they would work after they had been tried.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE said that they would have an opportunity before they were likely to have another election for this House of judging on the merits of the ballot by the use of it in the next Ontario election. If this trial showed that the present bill required amendment, it could be made before an election took place under it.

Right Hon. Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD contended that, if the impersonations were few, the cases in which secrecy would be violated were also few, and he thought that justice to the people was of far more importance than secrecy in any one case. Besides

which, secrecy would not be violated in the case of a genuine vote, the search only being made in the case of impersonation.

He also censured the Government for their apparent desire to carry things all their own way and pay no attention to suggestions from hon. gentlemen on his side of the House.

Hon. Mr. BLAKE replied at considerable length, maintaining his former proposition.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT explained the operation of his proposed numbered ballot and counterfoil, the number on the counterfoil being not necessarily the same as that on the voter's list, but one of another set of numbers to that which might be accorded to the voters.

The subject was still under discussion when the House rose for recess.

AFTER RECESS

The amendment was put and lost, and the clause, as it stood, was carried.

Upon the amendment for the adoption of the 26th clause,

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT asked if it would not be well to take precaution against ballots being slipped into the box which did not come from the Returning officer's hand.

Hon. Mr. DORION said that in some cases ballots were initialled, but he had thought this a senseless formality which would delay the voting. However, the clause might be allowed to pass, and he would consider the matter again, and if he came to the conclusion that it was necessary to do anything in the direction the hon. gentleman indicated, he would make provision for it in the Bill.

The clause then passed.

In the next clause a verbal amendment was made on the suggestion of **Mr. BLAIN**.

The next clause, which required the expenditure of money, was allowed to stand for the present.

Clauses 29 to 37 were allowed to pass with but slight amendments.

On clause 38 under which Judges are disqualified from voting,

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT suggested that there was an omission to exclude officers of Customs and Excise.

Hon. Mr. DORION said, in answer to Hon. Mr. Abbott, that under the ballot he could not see why Government officials, including customs officials, should not vote. He thought everyone should vote under the ballot. His motive for prohibiting judges from voting was that he did not think it desirable they should mix themselves up in politics, because, if they did, they would not have