

that the return might have had to be sent back for amendment or for completion, I took the opportunity of writing to the returning officer to ascertain that the return was made properly and at the time stated by him in his letter to me. I received this letter from him a few days ago :

" GORRIE, 25th April, 1887.

" To PETER MACDONALD, M. P.,
" OTTAWA.

" SIR,—In reply to your request of the 23rd, in reference to the return of election made by me, I have to say that the writ of election with all the matter pertaining to the election was by me mailed at the Gorrie post office and registered as required by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, addressed to him on 9th day of March, 1887. A copy of your return as M.P. was sent to you at the same time. Hoping this reply will be satisfactory to you,

" Yours Respectfully,
" THOMAS K. BODDY,
" Returning Officer for East Huron."

I find on looking up the return submitted to the House by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery that the return for my county purports not to have been received by him until the 26th, that is to say seventeen days after it was said to have been registered at the Gorrie post office; and if it was registered on the 9th it would certainly have arrived here on the 10th, and my name should have been gazetted on the 12th. But the *Gazette* of that date was published and my name did not appear. The *Gazette* of the 19th, also of the 26th, appeared without my name, and it was not until the 2nd April that my return was gazetted, no less than twenty-one days after the return was made. The hon. member for Bothwell said that probably a great deal of this want of punctuality arose from the returning officers. It is, however, plainly seen by the letter I have read that the returning officer for my county discharged his duty efficiently and made his return in accordance with law; and therefore the fault, wherever it lies, does not lie with the returning officer. In fact, I judge that the fault is not entirely with the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery; because from an answer to a question propounded to the First Minister the inference must be drawn that there has been some tampering with that official. It is impossible to see what object the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery would have in gazetting the names in such a way as to favor the Conservatives and injure the Reformers, unless he had received some instruction from a high source, the source from which his office comes. When the First Minister said he refused to answer the question as to whether the Government had a conference with the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery or not, the only natural inference to be drawn was that they had given instructions to him. I ask hon. gentlemen opposite, as well as hon. members on this side of the House, whether they consider such conduct as right and just in the interests of the affairs of this country, and whether it is right and proper to adopt an amendment so as to prevent an investigation by which the blame could be placed on the shoulders of the persons who are actually responsible. If the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery were brought before the Committee on Privileges and Elections he could be interrogated, and in order to shield himself from the imputation of acting dishonestly, he would, no doubt, under oath, give testimony as to whether he had received instructions from the Ministers or not, and then the country would see who were the parties to blame in this matter. I, therefore, hope that for the honor and dignity of this House, hon. members will rise above politics and vote for a full and complete investigation of this scandal.

Mr. MALLORY. It is evident from remarks of hon. gentlemen who have preceded me that something wrong has occurred either in the management of the elections, or in the returns which the returning officers have made to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, or in the action of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery himself, or possibly in con-

nection with the instructions which Government may have given their servants in connection with the conduct of the elections which recently took place. It is incumbent upon this House that some investigation into the serious charges made should take place. If the Government whose servant, particularly the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery is, and to whom the returning officers owe their appointments, have through their officers conducted the elections properly, it is only fair to this House and the country that this fact should be known, and it is unfair to them that any imputation should hang over them in this respect. If the returning officers have performed their duty properly and faithfully in the public interest it is only right that they too should be cleared of any imputation of wrong-doing. If, again the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery has discharged his duties properly it is only right that he should have full opportunity to clear himself from any charge made against him. So, the only proper course for this House to take is to refer the whole matter to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, in order that the committee might enter upon a careful examination of the parties, under oath, and ascertain just where the instructions came from, if any instructions were given to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, and ascertain exactly what instructions were given to the returning officers, if any instructions except those which the law provides, were given to them. I believe that in some instances the blame cannot be placed upon any one particular set of shoulders. I honestly believe that there has been a preconcerted scheme, in order that the returns should be delayed by the returning officers and by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. So far as my own constituency is concerned the election was held on the 22nd of February; the six days which the law allows to make the return had nearly expired when, on the evening of the sixth day my opponent applied for a recount. The application was granted, and it took from that time until the 17th of March to get the decision of the judge in reference to the recount. I do not wish it to be understood that I blame the county judge in any way for the manner in which he conducted the recount, for I believe he conducted it fairly and honestly, though there was some unavoidable delay. On the 17th his decision was given with regard to the recount, and the declaration was made. On the 18th I received a notice from the returning officer that my return was made on the 18th of March, and, if that was the case, the return should have been mailed to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery on the evening of the 18th. But such was not the case—why, I cannot tell. I should be sorry indeed to cast any imputation on the returning officer, because I believe that, unless he had instructions from some outside source, he would have mailed his return promptly, for on the day of declaration he informed me that he had only six days in which to make his return, and that if a recount was asked for—as they stated that day that it would—immediately the decision of the judge was given he must mail his return to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. But what do we find? Although he gave me notice of my return on the 18th, that return was not mailed from the post office until the evening of the 29th. Why should this long delay occur, unless there were instructions from some outside source? The returning officer was a lawyer himself; he knew the law, and he told me what the law was when I asked him. As I stated, I have a letter from him, and I have also a letter from the post office authorities at his post office, showing that the return was not mailed until the evening of the 29th. Now, Sir, in this case the mails were not at fault, because I find from the return of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery that this particular return was received on the 30th. But I find also that, instead of its being gazetted in the next *Gazette*, which was issued on the 2nd day of April, it was delayed for some mysterious reason. What that