Assembly, the holding of offices under the Crown, municipal offices, and the power of voting, for a considerable period of time. They proposed to ask the House if it would not be advisable in cases where charges of corrupt acts were made against a candidate that the decision should not be left to two judges instead of one, so that all might have the protection which the united judgment of two judges would afford. They proposed also to give the Court of Error and Appeal the authoritative duty to review the judgment of the judges upon matters of fact, which although they now held it was not practically exercised. Serious consequences had arisen from the decisions of single judges, which were practically without appeal. They therefore thought it advisable to give larger authority to the Court of Appeal than it now held. They also proposed to adopt the provision of the Dominion Act which rendered agents personally liable for their corrupt acts by which disabilities fell upon candidates without their having any knowledge of such corrupt acts. (Hear, hear.) He thought all would consider this provision a good one, as it would make agents more cautious in their conduct when they knew that costs or even fines would be incurred by their committing corrupt acts. (Cheers.)

Mr. MEREDITH said he supposed that when the finding of the judges did not agree, the judgment would be considered in favour of the candidate under trial.

Mr. MOWAT said that when this happened no corrupt practices were found.

Mr. MEREDITH—But there may be an appeal?

Mr. MOWAT—Yes.

Mr. DEACON—Will two judges preside at the trial of the election?

Mr. MOWAT—Yes.

Mr. GIBSON was proceeding to address the House when the question of order was raised, that a discussion should not take place on the first reading.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was not customary to allow a debate on the first reading, unless there was a *bona fide* intention of opposing the Bill.

Mr. MOWAT hoped the rule would not be strictly enforced on this occasion, as he was anxious to get any suggestions that might be made by hon. members.

Mr. GIBSON said he was just proceeding to offer some suggestions which he thought might be adopted, but had no objection to the Bill, as he believed its principle was a right one. He was of opinion that the time within which an election petition could be put in should be limited, and that a petitioner should not be allowed, as he now was, to hold a petition over a candidate's head for a whole year. (Hear, hear.) There was another matter which though perhaps not exactly pertinent to the present Bill was very pertinent to the situation of some hon. members who had formerly had seats in the House, but who had been, he had no hesitation in saying, disqualified for almost nothing. No member of the House could hold the judges of this Province in greater veneration than he did, but the general opinion of the country was that they were not so consistent and harmonious as might have been expected; but that feeling prevailed no doubt more generally among laymen than among lawyers. Nevertheless, the universal opinion was that the penalties imposed on some gentlemen were altogether beyond the offence of which they had been guilty. No law could be long maintained which provided a penalty much greater than the offence, and which made an offender into a martyr. If the Government could introduce a measure to remove the disabilities under which some gentlemen suffered in consequence of the actions of the courts, they would receive the support of the House. Retrospective legislation was undesirable, nevertheless an exception might be made in the present case.

Mr. LYON supported the motion. The member for Halton was disqualified on a trifling charge, and the evidence was very weak. He hoped the Government would introduce a Bill to release those gentlemen from the disabilities under which they suffered.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Attorney-General if he proposed to bring in a measure to relieve those persons suffering under the disabilities referred to, and whether he would amend the law in regard to drinking on polling days.

Mr. MOWAT said the Bill so far as it was prepared dealt with the future and not with the past. There would be some provision in the measure to meet the second point of the question.

Mr. SCOTT urged that some means should be provided for a speedy re-count of the ballots. The question might be submitted to the Judge of the Court of Error and Appeal or a County Court Judge, and thereby much time and money would be saved as compared with the present practice. Any measure proposed for the relief of members disqualified by the Election Courts would receive his hearty support.

Mr. HODGINS agreed that public opinion was in favour of some measure being enacted for the relief of gentlemen who had been disqualified by the decisions of the Election Courts. Under the present system deputy returning-officers decided points regarding the validity of the ballots which on appeal could only be decided by the Court of Error and Appeal. He held that if it could be shown by affidavit to the Returning-Officer or County Court Judge that the ballots had been incorrectly counted, or that some rejected ballots ought to have been counted, a re-count of the ballots should take place in the presence of the returning-officer before he made his final return to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, subject to an immediate appeal to the Court of Error and Appeal. If such a system were inaugurated, the great delay and expense now involved in obtaining a re-count of the ballots would be obviated.

Mr. LAUDER concurred in the opinion that the members disqualified suffered great hardships. The next hardship to disqualification was the enormous bill of costs that parties to election trials were called upon to pay. A tariff of fees should be fixed by the Legislature, so that the costs of petitioner or respondent might be made a moderate amount.

Mr. McMAHON said that Mr. Stock had been elected to represent his constituency in January last, but was disqualified for drinking on polling day. He was then elected and had a petition now hanging over his head. He thought it was just that Mr. Stock should have his disability removed, though he was opposed to the law itself being altered. If he should be unseated, and Mr. Stock should be enabled to run against him, he would have to meet a very strong candidate, but he relied on the support of his Reform friends, and he hoped he should receive the assistance of the member for South Simcoe (hear, hear, as before, and also that of the member for East Grey. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEROCHE expressed his regret that the Government had not brought down a measure relieving these gentlemen from the disability under which they laboured. The result of the law had been beneficial, but he hoped these gentlemen who had violated a law which was more severe than they thought would be relieved.

Mr. DEACON said he should not offer any opposition to a measure relieving these gentlemen, and so in fact pardoning those who were proved to be guilty. He thought the House had legislated too far, and that its measures ought to be regulated by common sense. The judges seemed generally to assume that the respondent must be guilty, and seats had been avoided on grounds which did not affect the result in the slightest degree. He thought rejected ballots ought to be at once decided upon by the County Judge or some one, and where the intention was apparent ought to be added to the votes on one side or the other.

Mr. BRODER supported the proposal to make agents liable for costs, but was opposed to relieving those who had been disqualified. The operation of the law had been successful. He thought the Court should not be allowed to enlarge the particulars during the trial. He thought the cost should be regulated if possible. The present system seemed to be to find out what a man was worth, and levy for half of it. He believed the law should be stringent, and objected to retroactive legislation, though he would be willing to agree to the limitation of the time of disqualification.

Mr. CREIGHTON referred to the hardship in the case of Mr. Scott, the late member for North Grey. He believed the Act had been too strictly applied, and was in favour of doing away with the disqualification.

Mr. MOWAT said it was to be regretted that the cost of these trials was so large, but he did not know that it was possible to make them smaller. The machinery was as simple as possible, and the amounts taxed for costs were the same as in civil suits. He