

Nipissing which was read the first time.

THE ELECTION LAW.

Mr. MOWAT said he had intended to introduce a Bill making a few changes in reference to certain evils discovered in the Election Law. One evil was in connection with the affidavits in regard to the Voters' Lists. Owing to the fact that a sufficient expression of opinion had not been obtained in reference to these changes, he had abandoned the responsibility of introducing a measure of this kind, but would probably do so next session. He, therefore, would merely introduce the Bill he had put forward at the beginning of the session, entitled "An Act to amend the Act respecting the election of members of the Legislature."

The Bill was read the first time.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BILLS.

The amendments made in Committee on the Bill to incorporate the People's Gas Company were concurred in.

The amendments made in Committee on the Bill respecting the Toronto Street Railway Company were concurred in.

The Bill to provide for the erection of a court house in the city of Hamilton was read the second time, on motion of Mr. Sexton.

ELECTION OF MAYORS IN TORONTO.

On the motion for concurrence in the amendments made in Committee on the Bill respecting the city of Toronto, the Toronto Water-works and other matters,

Mr. CAMERON moved the recommission of the Bill to Committee of the Whole, with instructions to strike out the clause providing for the election of the Mayor of Toronto by the Council of the Corporation. The change was not one which was desired by the people of Toronto, as was evidenced by the fact that largely signed petitions had to-day been presented in favour of retaining the present system. The Mayors of Toronto had generally been men well fitted for their position.

Mr. HODGINS said the question involved was one of principle. The Mayor was merely a presiding officer, and like other presidents should be elected by the body whose deliberations he guided. With regard to his position on the Board of Police Commissioners, it was known that this body controlled expenditure for which the City Council had to provide, and this was a reason why he should be elected by the Council. He could obtain petitions signed by thousands in favour of the Bill as passed by the Committee.

Mr. O'DONOGHUE thought it peculiar that if the Council and citizens wished the change the call for it did not come through its representatives. He contended that it was not wanted, and he trusted that it would not be granted by a House which wishes to be thought progressive, and which has been lately extending the franchise. He thought it would be inconsistent to take back the franchise from those who were now in this matter exercising it properly. He thought this measure would permit of the election of a mayor who might be personally distasteful to the people.

Mr. BELL was decidedly opposed to the election of the Mayor by the Council. Two large petitions had been presented to-day praying that the election of the Mayor might continue to be vested in the people. The matter had long been discussed, and it had not been found that any citizen outside the Council was in favour of the change authorized by the Bill. He thought the agitation was caused by certain gentlemen who were unpopular with the people, and knew they had no chance of election under the present system. He understood a deputation had waited upon the Attorney-General in opposition to the change.

Mr. MOWAT said the hon. gentleman was mistaken in stating that such a deputation had waited upon him, and that the agitation was originated solely by unpopular candidates for the mayoralty. The present Mayor was in favour of the Bill.

Mr. BELL said it was only that morning that the Mayor had expressed his opposition to the Bill.

Mr. MOWAT said that in that case the Mayor must have changed his mind.

Mr. PATTERSON (Essex) favoured the election of mayors in cities by the Corporation, but thought the change should be effected by general legislation, and not smuggled through in a Bill relating to the Toronto Water-Works and other matters, and applying only to the city of Toronto. If the city of Toronto desired a special charter for its

government it would be the duty of this House to accede to the wishes of the city, and then some such features as that proposed might be introduced, but it ought to be brought in in such a way as to be known to the public, and not inserted at almost the last moment in a measure of this character.

Mr. MASSIE knew that in many corporations the feeling existed that its head should be elected by its Council. He said that the best men will not come out and take a seat at the Council Board, but if they might have the chance of being made mayor by the Council, they would do so. He thought that the proposed change would operate for good, and regretted that it did not extend to towns. He thought that the mayor should be elected in the same way as a warden.

Mr. MEREDITH said that the fact that both the representatives of Toronto opposed the change, must be received as an expression of the opinion of the people.

Mr. HARDY said that the fact of the candidate who made the election of mayor by the people the leading plank of his platform being defeated by about a thousand of a majority by the candidate who wished election by council, joined to the petitions of the Council recently returned from the people, was evidence enough that the change was strongly desired, and ought to enter deeper into their estimation than the presenting of petitions signed by whom they knew not.

Mr. MACDOUGALL (Simcoe) said that it surprised him to hear members of the Reform Party opposing principles that were planks in their platform. The depriving the people of the right to elect the mayor was tantamount to an expression of distrust in the people, which could not be reconciled with their theory of popular government. There was nothing to justify the Legislature in supposing that the petition of the 28 members of the Council represented the wishes of the citizens. The present Mayor made it a plank in his platform when last seeking election that he would support the present method of election, and he was returned by a large majority. There was little doubt that his assurance tended to secure his election. The Mayor had important duties to perform outside the Council Chamber, and it was peculiarly proper he should be the representative of the whole city, and not of a single ward, having the particular interests of that ward to secure his re-election as Alderman.

Mr. CURRIE said that, knowing that both the late and the present Council of the city of Toronto were in favour of the change, and believing that it would result in the election of better mayors, he was prepared to support the amendment of the member for West Elgin. By the Municipal Bill introduced by the late Mr. Baldwin in 1849, mayors of cities and towns were made elective by the Council, and that principle had been in force until 1858 when the Conservative party were in power. He was in favour of going back to the old Reform measure of 1849. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LAUDER said the reason the members of the City Council were petitioning for the change was just because it would give them an additional chance for election in their several wards. He believed that Mr. Warring Kennedy was in favour of keeping the law as it now stood. The Mayor was responsible to the people in very many respects, and should therefore be elected by them. He was surprised to find a Reformer like the member for West Elgin—one holding ultra radical views on some questions—should be found going back upon what had always been a Reform principle.

Mr. DEROCHE said he would oppose the amendment proposed by the member for Elgin, believing that it was not a true Reform principle. The mayor would feel himself more directly responsible to the people if he were elected by them than if he were elected by the Council.

Mr. OLARKE (Norfolk) said he scarcely thought that with regard to this matter the member for Welland, who even went so far as manhood suffrage, was consistent with the Reform principles which he had so long professed. He congratulated the member for South Simcoe on the fact that he was adhering to genuine Liberal principles in refusing to deprive the people of the power they now held. He proceeded to read a platform laid down by the member for South Simcoe in the *North American* newspaper of 1851, and said that he (Mr. Clarke) was glad the hon. member had lived to see so many of the principles he had then laid