Mr. Meredith spoke at some length and with characteristic vigor. In view of the facts as he believed them to be, there should be a clear understanding as to the relation of the clerk of the House to the House. The gentleman elected in the general election in North Perth was unseated. The voters' list in Stratford was being revised, and as revised they were much more favorable to the Conservative party than the old lists. These lists were actually completed and filed with the clerk of the peace on the 15th December. He believed there was a deliberate design to hasten the issue of the writ for the bye-election illegally in order to prevent this new list from being used. This charge he proceeded to make good by a statement of the facts as he claimed them to be:—The election trial took place on the 8th and 9th December. On the 10th the decision of the judges vacating the seat was communicated to the clerk of the House. On the 13th, just two days before the new lists were ready, the writ for a new election was issued. He held it to be illegal to issue the writ until after eight days from the time of the disposition of the case by the judges, parties having eight days in which to appeal. He supposed a case in which an appeal had been taken and the decision of the court below reversed, the writ having meantime been issued, and contended that nothing could be clearer than that the law provided for eight days' delay in which there was to be no writ issued. There was also internal evidence in the papers that the election had been brought on hastily. There were three election trials at this time, South Norfolk, East Durham and West Perth. In the East Durham case the certificate of the judges was received 4th December, but the writ did not issue until 20th December, seven days after that for North Perth. He felt confident that the clerk of the House in this matter did not act of himself. Fortunately the object sought was not attained and the Conservative candidate was returned. At this Mr. Meredith's friends applauded loudly.

Hon. Mr. Hardy rose to reply. He disabled Mr. Meredith's interpretation of the law, and said that gentleman had studiously kept out of sight one fact, with which fact no one was more familiar than the last speaker, seeing he was engaged as counsel in the case, and which materially affected his argument to-day. That fact was that the decision voiding this election was made by consent, and consequently there could be no appeal. He read the clause referred to by Mr. Meredith to show that "in case the decision of the judge or judges voiding the election is appealed from" there should be delay. But as there could be no appeal the clause did not affect the case. Mr. Hardy went on to say that he had not got up the case and was not fully acquainted with the facts, and the Attorney-General, who had investigated the matter, had not the papers with him. But he took what appeared on the surface. The policy was to have bye-elections, as far as possible, on the same day. In the Hamilton and North Bruce cases adjournments of the courts made it desirable to go on with the other four elections. It was claimed there was delay in issuing the writ in East Durham. Why that was he was not sufficiently conversant with the facts to say.

Mr. Meredith interposed a remark concerning the issue of the writs in Hamilton and East Bruce, but when asked concerning these he could only say that they had not been issued until after the delay of eight days. Mr. Hardy, however, pointed out that these were not decided by consent and declared his opinion that if the matter were investigated it would be found that these writs were prepared as soon as the certificate came into the hands of the clerk. As to the new voters' list in Stratford, he showed what delays there might be in the final preparation of such lists, and asked how it could reasonably be assumed that the Government could have any knowledge of the details of this revision. He suggested that perhaps the Conservatives had been hurrying up the list in the hope of having it ready for the election, and asked why they did not let it be known what they were doing so that their wishes might be met. He spoke of the recent great contest in which the leader of the Opposition had been silent, and suggested that perhaps he had refrained from action so that he might take up this case with some show of consistency. It would have been strange to talk as he did about a voters' list had he defended the action of the Dominion Government in springing an election upon the country with a voters' list containing the names of 50,000 dead men, with 116,000 names of young men fairly entitled to vote left off it, and this in face of the solemn promise that this list should not be used for a general election.

No member of the Opposition rose, though Mr. H. E. Clarke looked around at Mr. Magwood as if he expected that gentleman to speak. Mr. Speaker was on his feet to put the resolution and Mr. Clarke rose hastily, that the case might not go by default. He spoke, he said, as a layman, but said there was some information which ought to be given to laymen. It seemed to him reasonable that the lawyers and candidates in any contest were not the only people to be consulted, but that any elector ought to have the right to appeal, and asked if this was not the law. Mr. Hardy interposed that Mr. Meredith would hardly say this was the law. He accused Mr. Hardy of making a stump speech and virtuously declared that he and his friends did not discuss Dominion matters in this House, and then straightway began a "whoop-er-up" about the Old Man, the Old Flag and the Old Policy having carried the day.

Mr. Mowat said he believed that when a decision in an election case was given by consent there was no appeal, and the candidates and immediate parties to the inquiry were held to represent all the electors.

Mr. H. E. Clarke—Have the electors no right of appeal?

Mr. Mowat—Not as a matter of course. If there is reason for allowing an appeal of course the court has jurisdiction and can give it. But it is certain that no appeal would be given where the parties had consented to judgment.

Mr. Meredith—Why not, if there was collusion?

Mr. Mowat—Need I discuss that? My hon. friend was one of the counsel, and he will hardly say there was collusion. I never read of a case in which there was a consent judgment and in which an appeal was allowed. He went on to say that he gave no written instructions, but he intimated to the officers of his department that the writs should be prepared immediately on the vacancy being certified and left ready to be issued when a date at which several elections could be held together could be fixed. He pointed out that if elections were to be delayed because of new voters' lists it would lead to the defeated parties urging forward the preparation of the new lists before the bye-election. He could not see how any other course could fairly have been taken than that followed in reference to these elections. The resolution calling for papers was adopted.

When Mr. Wood's resolution in favor of paying registrars, etc., by salary instead of by fees was called Mr. Mowat asked that it should be allowed to stand, as Mr. Fraser, then temporarily absent, desired to be present when it was discussed. "He is the only member of the Administration who will defend the present system, I suppose," suggested Mr. Meredith. The item was allowed to stand.

The first order under the head of public bills was Mr. Meredith's proposed measure to amend the Ontario Controverted Elections Act. Mr. Meredith proposed to go on, but Mr. Mowat asked for delay, as the bill was not printed. It was plainly marked "printed" on the order paper, and when this was called to his attention Mr. Mowat said the bill had only been distributed a short time before and he had had no time to look at it.