

Mr. Hodgins and his ram, and informed the House that according to Mr. Hodgins' written statement the animal in question was at the Guelph farm in 1886, which was before Hon. Mr. Dryden became Minister of Agriculture and before there was any Minister of Agriculture for the Province. Therefore the charge that Mr. Dryden was guilty of any wrongdoing was disproved. The remainder of the afternoon and evening sessions was occupied by the debate on the constables bill, which was opened by Mr. Whitney, who was followed by Hon. Mr. Ross, Colonel Matheson, Mr. German and others.

#### Privilege.

Hon. Mr. Davis, rising to a question of privilege, called attention to an editorial article in *The Mail and Empire* of to-day in reference to the charge made by Mr. Hodgins regarding the alleged purchase of a senile ram for the Agricultural Farm. After reading the article in question, Mr. Davis said that it was pretty clear that there are two features intended to be impressed upon the House and upon the country by the article, one of which was that this worthless animal was purchased by the Agricultural College at a great loss to the Province, and the second was that Hon. Mr. Dryden was the man who perpetrated this wrong upon the Province. He held in his hands a certified statement from Mr. Hodgins that this animal was imported by him in 1882, and that in the fall of 1885 he sold it to J. Glennie of Guelph, and that he saw it at the Guelph farm in 1886. Assuming for the moment that it was there, he pointed out that the Hon. Mr. Dryden was not Minister of Agriculture in 1886. That was before any Minister of Agriculture was appointed in the Province at all, and when Superintendent Brown had charge of the college at Guelph. So that the charge that Hon. Mr. Dryden was guilty of anything wrong was entirely mistaken, was not borne out by the facts, and he hoped that the paper would make a retraction, stating the facts of the case. With reference to the charge that the animal had been purchased at an exorbitant price in 1886, the records of the farm have been searched studiously, and it could not be found that in that or any other year any such animal had been purchased from Mr. Glennie or anybody else. (Cheers.)

Hon. Mr. Hardy moved the second reading of the bill respecting the election laws, without offering any remarks upon the bill.

#### Mr. Whitney.

Mr. Whitney immediately rose to criticize the bill and was received with applause from the Opposition benches. He said that after a lapse of a considerable time they were face to face with the mature proposition of the Government. After practically two weeks' hesitation and discussion the Government had decided accurately the distance which they will recede or retreat in this matter of the proposed amendment to the election law, with regard

to the constable votes and the owners of polling booths. His hon. friend, the Attorney-General, has at last decided upon the form and the shape of the stairway or ladder by which he should climb out of the slight depression—(laughter)—into which he admitted the Government had fallen, and they were now able to see what its effect would be and where it will land the Government, and why it will carry out the suggestion and declaration of his hon. friend for West Huron, when he said while they are fighting for a party cause they are not going to throw away an opportunity.

He proposed to enter into a proper and reasonable discussion of the attempt which has been made by the Government by means of the bill to override the legal result of the elections held on March 1st last. Now they had come there in the exercise of the privilege and right which rests in the Legislature to discuss the measure, to see whether it is a right and proper measure, and whether it will bear the combined weight of the gentlemen on the Treasury benches, as they climb up out of the hole into which they have fallen. (Cheers.) His hon. friend the

Premier said there had been no retrograde movement, that the Government have not gone back any distance at all, and further than that, that he has not heard of any objection from the ranks of the Reform party to the bill. He had been astonished to hear the statement of his hon. friend, because he could tell him now, that having due regard for garrulousness of speech on occasions like this, that confining himself to the City of Toronto alone, he could not go into any club or restaurant in the city where men congregate and sit down for ten minutes that he would not hear an expression of opposition to this bill and to the principle which prompted its introduction. He knew it to be true that the Reformers of the City of Toronto can be counted in large numbers, who express openly their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in existence to-day, by reason of the Government calling this session in an extraordinary manner for the purpose avowed by the Government. He then proposed to discuss for a moment whether the hon. Attorney-General had receded or not. In support of his contention that he had he pointed out that the hon. member for Oxford asserted that he was quite ready to have gone for the measure, which was indicated by the Reform press of the Province—simply a retroactive measure declaring that the constables have and always had the right to vote. He referred to the memorandum which had been quoted by the Attorney-General the other day, "That the Legislature should be asked to deal with the question in such a way as to it may seem reasonable and just." The reference in the memorandum to the refusal of the Court of Appeal to give an opinion failed to give the full facts. It should have gone on to state that the Judges expressed doubts whether it was a question upon which they should be asked to give an opinion, and, secondly, whether or not the decision, if they did give one, would be binding upon the trial Judge. That is a question of great importance