

ralities the option of adopting proportional representation, and suggested that the bill be extended. The act in so far as it reduced the number of County Councillors was a good measure, but the system should be amended so that each municipality might obtain direct representation in the County Council.

Hon. Mr. Hardy in reply said that faults are always to be found in connection with any departure from any well established rule, and perhaps the County Councils bill does not differ in that respect from other measures. It was quite understood at the time the measure was introduced that it was more or less an experiment. The dominant idea in connection with the double vote was to give smaller municipalities some protection against being outvoted by other municipalities. With regard to the beneficial results of the act, there were scarcely two opinions in the country. He was safe in saying it is beyond all question that the general opinion, both of the County Councillors themselves and the people generally, is overwhelmingly in favor of the change which has been made as compared with the old system. It was scarcely necessary to enter into a discussion with regard to County Councillors or the defects pointed out. The act works expeditiously, efficiently, and less money is expended than when people were gathered from all parts of the county to transact business; it is now done so quietly that the people of the county town hardly know that the Council is meeting. His hon. friends had always been divided upon the question of the double vote, and he (Mr. Hardy) was not going to object to the bill going to the Municipal Committee, nor had he any very strong opinion upon it himself. He had found in counties that are largely of one political complexion or the other it is to some extent unpopular, but where parties are evenly divided there would not be so much objection to the system as indicated by the opposition offered to the bill by the hon. member for South Waterloo. The proposition of the hon. member for Dufferin, he pointed out, involved the adoption of compulsory voting, a system which had been advocated but had not found many followers in the House, and he had never yet heard how it was proposed to make an elector vote for a man whom he did not want to vote for, and he did not believe the system would recommend itself to the House or to the country. With respect to the division of the counties, with rare exceptions they had been accepted as being as good as could have been made. In the election of Wardens it had been found that there was occasionally a tie, which continued sometimes for several days. That was perhaps to be deplored and regretted, and that is perhaps one of the weak points which had been developed in the working of the system. It probably might not be so if there were a single vote, and therefore it would be a question for the Municipal Committee to consider whether it is of sufficient importance to warrant a change in the system. A member of the Council, it would be generally found, regarded himself as representing all parts of the county, and there-

fore the complaint that any particular section of the county was unrepresented he did not regard as serious. Apart from the question of economy, he ventured to say that the bill has given more general satisfaction than any other measure making radical changes to the municipal act that has been before the House for many years. (Cheers.)

A Startling Statement.

Mr. Whitney characterized the Premier's statement as most startling, and prophesied that if Mr. Hardy would call a meeting of his supporters and ask their honest opinion as to the popularity of this law he would be the most surprised man in the City of Toronto. If there were no complaints he (Mr. Whitney) did not know what public opinion was. He could take the Attorney-General to a constituency where there were several municipalities in which his political friends were opposed to it. It was remarkable how short a time those people who three years ago had said the act was ill-considered, ill-digested and inopportune had to wait for their prophecies to be brought home. Now there was a desire from the house of its friends to kill the bill's utility. The Attorney-General had said that the act in many respects prevented the election of men to the County Council for mere party reasons. That, if true, was a good effect of this or any other law, and the mover of the bill was acting in direct opposition to his leader in seeking to kill the only portion of the bill from which any benefit had accrued. The whole trouble was the bill was not called for by anybody. It was neither desirable nor necessary to cut municipalities into two or three parts and attach them to other municipalities, rendering harmonious action impossible. The Government would never have adopted such a bill had it been brought down from the left side of the House. Citing the case of New York State, he said the representation could be reduced, as it was there, by representation by Reeves. The cost of the old County Council had, in an abstract sense, been heavy, but the people never objected to the \$3 a day paid to the Councillors, because the experience in municipal knowledge acquired by the members of the County Council, and which was carried back to their constituents, was of far more importance than the small amount of money which they obtained as their daily pay. He charged that the law had the ill-effect of driving desirable candidates for Reeve into the larger field of the County Council, and the interests of villages and townships were being neglected. He would never have believed Mr. Hardy to be the author of the bill if he had not said so. He believed the law was rapidly becoming unpopular, would be repealed in a short time, and, therefore, he would not retard its dissolution.

His Latest Outbreak.

Mr. Hardy quoted from the act to show that the commissioners, in dividing the municipalities should have had regard to the assessed value, population, etc. He had made inquiry into how some of the divisions were made and was informed that they had been