

as a farce and a humbug.
Mr. Foy—That was in regard to the scope of the commission, not of the commissioners.

Mr. Pettypiece—You talked that way in November, long before the scope or membership of the commission were known. (Opposition applause.) Mr. Price of the West Elgin Conservative Association had refused to go before the commission. Would Mr. Macdiarmid, the member for West Elgin, tell the commission what he knew?

Mr. Macdiarmid—I have no personal knowledge of the matter before the commission.

Mr. Pettypiece—Then if the hon. gentleman had no personal knowledge why did he make such an arraignment of the Government, and upon what was it based? (Ministerial cheers.) Mr. Wright, a Conservative organizer, had stated at a public meeting that he knew of the destruction of the ballots 24 hours after it occurred, having heard it from the man who did the trick. Why did not Mr. Wright go before the commission and divulge the name of the alleged destroyer of the ballots? They were asked by the amendment to act most severely towards the Sheriff of Elgin, who had been a little lax in his conduct, but had never previously been shown to be guilty of irregularities. He was not prepared to go that far.

Mr. Whitney's Charges.

Mr. Whitney, after expressing his surprise at the admissions made in the previous address, said that they were all aware that the Treasurer of the Province was capable, in fact markedly capable, of making an eloquent speech, but he honestly, candidly and openly made the statement that as long as he was in the Legislature he had never heard a Treasurer's budget speech which was not immeasurably its superior. This fact was all the more marvellous when the Treasurer's capabilities were considered. The leader of the Opposition attacked the Provincial Treasurer for the discrepancies between the statements of the Treasurer regarding the assets of the Province and the reports of the Financial Commission. The Government apparently could not explain these differences. Again, the members of the Government had time without number made the statement openly and publicly that the surplus amounted to \$5,000,000, and more than that, that the surplus was of such a nature that the hands of the Government could be readily placed upon it. The Financial Commission in its report placed the size of this surplus at \$2,000,000. Turning his attention to the West Elgin Commission, the leader of the Opposition said that while the hon. gentleman from East Lambton had made the statement that the Liberals condemned Sheriff Brown, he did not say why the Liberals condemned that official if he was not guilty. The carelessness which the hon. gentleman said was the only guilt of Sheriff Brown resulted in the robbery of a constituency and the disgracing of the fair name of the Province. Sheriff Brown was, however, to be condemned, but the major criminal, who really committed the crime and who was a

servant of the Government, was to be shielded. Mr. Whitney read from the printed copy of the investigation into the matter, and said that hon. gentlemen would believe that "carelessness" was not the word to be used in characterizing the action of a Sheriff who had sworn in as deputy returning officers men who but a few minutes before had been introduced to him. If these actions did not justify a Government in dismissing an official, hon. gentlemen would be glad to know the offence of which it would be necessary for an official to be guilty to justify his dismissal. A portion of the report of the investigation which appeared in The Globe was read by Mr. Whitney, the intention being to show that Sheriff Brown had admitted allowing strangers to obtain control of ballot-boxes. He asked if Sheriff Brown, after the discovery that ballot-boxes had been given to strangers, that these boxes had not been returned until a late hour, and then not by the men who had received them, had made no effort to locate these returning officers, what construction could be placed upon his actions? Every irregularity that had been discovered ought to have been dealt with, and as long as he was in public life men who violated the election laws would not be allowed to defy public opinion or violate self-respect. Mr. Whitney held that the matter of election frauds was much more important than the budget, and said that the Government had not heard the last of West Elgin. To-night they would compel hon. gentlemen to vote on the amendment, and he could not tell how soon again or how often hon. gentlemen would have opportunities of voting on the same matter.

The Premier's Reply.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross in closing the debate met the criticisms advanced by Mr. Whitney and various others members on the Opposition side. The Conservative leader had threatened that more should be heard of the West Elgin matter before the session closed. A very good answer had been given from the Government side to the charges preferred by the Opposition, but the Opposition were not yet satisfied. The Opposition leader had at last condemned Conservative corruption, but it had taken a long time. Mr. Whitney had declared that so long as he occupied his present position he would relax no effort to bring to justice villains and scoundrels who had violated the election law and who were now walking the streets. Let the Opposition leader begin with Mr. William Smith, who had confessed in open court to the expenditure of \$1,200 for the purposes of bribery in South Ontario. Mr. Smith was the bosom friend of Mr. Whitney, had sat on the same platform with the latter during recent elections in South Ontario, and had delivered addresses on behalf of the Conservative party, yet he was as free from prosecution by Mr. Whitney as was an angel in heaven. (Ministerial cheers.) The Opposition had been raising a hypocritical cry ever since the House met. If some misguided Liberal got into trouble he must be hounded with all the invective that could fall from Conservative lips.