

Should a Conservative commit an irregularity and confess to it in open court he was to remain untouched. Mr. Ross wanted Mr. Whitney to revise his declarations and to mention the villains and scoundrels he intended to pursue. In order to see whether the name of William Smith would appear among them.

#### Fair Play for Sheriff Brown.

The House was asked to dismiss Sheriff Brown. The Sheriff's case was sub-judice at the present moment; his case was to be investigated by a royal commission composed of competent Judges, upon whom no reflection could be cast. The Government was asked to dismiss Mr. Brown while his case was being tried before a court of competent jurisdiction, and before a verdict had been rendered. Was that fair or in accordance with British practice? Sheriff Brown's case would be investigated, and if the Judges declared that official to be guilty of irregularities which called for his dismissal, and the Government failed to act, then would be the proper time to make complaint. To dismiss a man before it was known how the case stood against him was, he repeated, contrary to the universally accepted notions of British fair play and justice. He was not going to defend Sheriff Brown, but there were one or two facts which should not be ignored in regard to him. The Sheriff was condemned for appointing deputy returning officers whom he did not know. Rarely was it the case, however, if ever, that a returning officer personally knew all the deputies who were appointed, and the law did not require that he should. The election trial Judges had reported three such deputies as having been appointed in the West Elgin case. Out of these two deputies were recommended to the Sheriff by persons whom he knew, but he was imposed upon in all three cases. This matter the commission would inquire into. The Sheriff at least was shown to have adopted the same precautions in the three cases referred to as other returning officers were in the habit of doing.

#### Some Who Escaped.

Look at what transpired elsewhere in regard to returning officers. In the West Northumberland election in 1891 Mr. Hargraff, the Liberal member, nearly lost his seat through the returning officer abusing his trust. Yet the same official was reappointed by

the Conservative Government at Ottawa. In Prince Edward Island the returning officer for the County of King declared the candidate who had received a majority of votes to be elected.

Mr. Whitney (ironically)—Ergo, Sheriff Brown ought to go free.

Mr. Ross—Ergo, my hon. friend ought to be fair, and not reserve all his invective for this side of politics. The Opposition leader had argued by implication that electoral corruption was the settled policy of the Liberal party, and that the settled policy of the Government was to cover up election irregularities. There was not a scintilla of truth in either charge. Duncan Bole was dismissed from the Government

employ the moment the report of the Judges finding him guilty of improper conduct was placed in the hands of the Government. If Sheriff Brown was shown to have merited dismissal he would be dismissed also. (Ministerial applause.) The Government proved their sincerity by their acts, but Mr. Whitney merely indulged in declamation. How could the Liberal party be charged with corruption? Out of 734 returning officers appointed by the Provincial Government only one had been noticed by the court as guilty of an irregularity, while only six deputies had been shown to be guilty of wrongdoing out of several thousands appointed. He would not refer to the gross irregularities which had been practised by the Conservatives at elections, nor to the misconduct that went on in connection with Mr. Haggart's administration of the Dominion Railway Department when \$394,000 was expended on a bridge contract that should only have cost \$70,000. The Opposition appeared to have no words of condemnation for such transactions as these.

#### A Very Proper Speech.

The Treasurer had been twitted with the character of the budget speech he had delivered. It was true the speech was not up to what his predecessor would have delivered, but the comforting facts about it were the announcement of a cash balance to the amount of \$800,000, a cash surplus on the year's transactions of \$400,000, and a surplus of assets over liabilities of over \$2,000,000. (Ministerial cheers.) "I like a well-rounded, well-advanced and well-delivered budget speech as well as my hon. friends," said Mr. Ross, "but the speech delivered by the present Treasurer has been received by the country in a very reassuring way, and perhaps the country will be less critical than the Opposition leader. I shall be satisfied if during the year I am able as Treasurer to supply funds to carry on our public institutions satisfactorily, meet the demands of our public schools, project something for the improvement of good roads and for the development of North Ontario and pay the hon. gentleman his indemnity. (Ministerial cheers and laughter.) If I can do that I may have fulfilled perhaps the main functions of the Provincial Treasurer."

#### Discrepancies Explained.

Mr. Ross then satisfactorily explained the apparent discrepancies between the receipts and expenditures, as published in the Treasurer's yearly statement, and those given in the report of the Financial Commission to which Messrs. Marter, Matheson and Foy had drawn attention. The misapprehension was partly due to the fact that for several years after Confederation receipts which should have gone to the Province went to the Dominion and were paid out by the latter on behalf of Ontario. The confusion, therefore, resulted from the bookkeeping of the Dominion. In the case of the item of \$925,625 and other amounts referred to, they were clearly cases of cross-entry and nothing else.