

likely be introduced, and in all probability Hon. J. M. Gibson will move the second reading of the Government bill to amend the election act. Afterwards the Government will make an attempt to reach Committee of Supply, when the Opposition may spring another amendment relating to the West Elgin election, or some other matter.

#### Election Law Amendments.

The Ministerial bill to amend the election act is so drastic in its character that its very severity is not unlikely to be the subject of remark in committee. The measure goes far beyond what Mr. Whitney proposes, and if, when enacted, the law does not put down election corruption and irregularities, then the task will be almost beyond human ingenuity. Speaking generally, the penalties are increased all along the line, so as to make imprisonment for bribery compulsory. One of the most important provisions in the bill is that which adopts the procedure of the English law with regard to persons called upon to give evidence incriminating themselves. It is provided that any person who at an election trial answers truly is entitled to receive a certificate indemnifying him against any future prosecution for corrupt practices. In the case of persons who give false testimony they will still, as heretofore, be liable for having perjured themselves.

#### The Penalty Clauses.

It is interesting to note how the penalty for various acts of bribery has been increased. In the case of a person bribing or corrupting a voter the law already provides a penalty of \$200. In addition to this, the accused will, on conviction, hereafter be imprisoned for six months, with or without hard labor. The bill grants discretionary power to the Judge in the case of what might be termed minor offenders; that is to say, persons who accept money for their votes. The bill very properly draws a distinction between persons who accept money for their votes and those who deliberately set to work to corrupt them. The bribe-taker may, in the discretion of the trial Judge, be imprisoned for a term not exceeding six months, or be fined not more than \$200, or be subjected to both penalties. The person convicted of unduly influencing a voter, besides a money penalty of \$200 is to be imprisoned for one year, with or without hard labor. The offence of personation is at present punishable with a fine of \$200, and imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months. The present measure increases the fine to \$400 and the period of incarceration to twelve months, with or without hard labor. The double vote is already punishable by a fine of \$200. It is now proposed that imprisonment for six months, with or without hard labor, shall accompany the fine.

#### Severe on Returning Officers.

The returning officer who falsifies or alters election returns is already liable to a penalty of \$2,000. To this punishment is now added imprisonment for twelve months. For ballot-stuffing a returning officer renders himself liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, and any other person to a term not exceeding six months. It is now proposed to enact: "Any returning officer guilty of any violation of this section shall be liable to imprisonment for three years, with or without hard labor, and any other person shall be liable to imprisonment for one year." Any person convicted of abetting in this offence is to be imprisoned for twelve months also.

#### Separation of Ballots.

There are provisions which render a repetition of the accident which occurred in the West Elgin ballots next to impossible. The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery is to keep the documents re-

lating to the general election separate from the bye-election returns. The returning officer is required to affix a label to the boxes in which the papers are transmitted, showing the district from which the papers came and the date of the election. In the event of any order being made directing that the ballot-papers are not to be destroyed a label is to be attached to the boxes, specifying the fact. In ridings where the returning officer does not chance to be a Sheriff or Registrar, it is required that he shall be a voter. Deputy returning officers and poll clerks must be voters in the municipality in which they are acting. No returning officer is to give a certificate to an agent to vote unless he has ascertained that the name of such person is on the voters' list. On giving the certificate the returning officer is to notify the deputy for the polling subdivision in which the applicant is entered, and thereafter such person is not to be entitled to vote in the said division. The object of this provision is to prevent any possibility of personation.

#### Grand River Floods.

On account of urgent representations by Mr. T. H. Preston, member for South Brant, to the Government, regarding the likelihood of serious damage to the City of Brantford from the Grand River overflowing its banks, Mr. McCallum, Engineer of the Public Works Department, was directed to proceed to Brantford and report upon such remedial measures as might be found necessary. He left last night on his mission. The City of Brantford is greatly indebted to Mr. Preston for the persistency with which he has urged its claims upon the Government. Speaking the other day upon the drainage bill, which the Premier introduced, Mr. Preston brought the subject of the Grand River floods to the attention of the House, and he did this in such a forcible and impressive manner as to convince the majority of members that the matter was one which called for prompt investigation.

#### Mr. O'Donoghue Resigns.

Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, who for some