

NUMBERED BALLOT IS STILL IN USE.

Government Assailed on Kingston Election Practice.

SAMPLES TO BE PRODUCED

Change in the Appointment of Returning Officers.

No Longer Restricted to Sheriffs and Registrars—Opposition Assumes the Offensive—Preservation of Niagara Falls—Commercial Travellers' Tax—Many Bills Dealt With — Second Readings.

A flaw was found in the Government armor by Mr. Pense in the Legislature yesterday, when he thrust home his arguments on the use of a numbered ballot at the late Kingston bye-election, and was sustained in his attack by Hon. Mr. Ross, who pleaded for the adoption of an absolutely unidentifiable ballot, such as is used in Dominion elections. The Government attempted to minimize the situation, but promised to bring down a fac simile of the ballot used. Later on, over Mr. Duff's bill to make voters in general eligible for appointment as returning officers, Mr. Preston (Brant) and Mr. Harcourt criticized the measure as a further concession to the spoils system. A number of bills were given a second reading.

The Numbered Ballot Retained.

Mr. Pense moved that fac similes of the ballot papers used in the city of Kingston and in the North Toronto bye-elections be laid on the table. In support of the motion, which was agreed to, the member for Kingston said it would be a surprise to all to know, after the measure that had been passed last session, that numbered ballots had been used with great effect in the Kingston bye-election. Mr. Pense gave the Government credit for the best intention in respect to the measure passed last session with a view to abolishing the numbered ballot, on which everybody in the House had been agreed. In the Kingston election the ballots were numbered, both on the stub and on the body of the ballot. The bill of last session eliminated the placing in the poll books of numbers corresponding to the ballots. But if ballots were numbered it was easy for a deputy returning officer or a scrutineer to make a secret note of or bear the number of a ballot given to certain parties in mind, and when they were being counted he could ascertain how those parties voted. Mr. Pense thought some wicked partners of the Government in the constituency were responsible. The members of the Government were most fair in their speeches on their appearances in the riding, and he had no complaint on that score.

Lax Enforcement of License Law.

Proceeding, Mr. Pense stated that under the previous Administration there had been strict enforcement of the liquor law in Kingston, in one year as many as sixteen convictions being recorded. There had been a great decrease in convictions under the present Government, and on the face of it that might look like better regard for the law. Neverthe-

less it was true that the hotels had been running with open doors not only on Sundays but late at night. Mr. Pense commented on Government members visiting the Kingston Asylum during the election campaign, and said also he had understood there was an investigation into the alleged partisanship of one Davis, an employee of the asylum, during the same period. The effect that was intended to produce could be imagined. In former years, he went on, the hotelkeepers of Kingston had gone to the polls to cast their votes, and politically they were about evenly divided. On the occasion of the bye-election there was a noticeable absence of them at the polls, and many of them had since been ashamed to look him in the face. In concluding, he held that some explanation was due from the Government on these matters, particularly in respect to the numbered ballot.

The Attorney-General's View.

Hon. Mr. Foy had no objection to the fac similes being brought down. The member for Kingston had drawn conclusions without stating the facts on which they were based. In the North Toronto bye-election, owing to a message sent him, he had gone to one of the polling booths to examine the ballots in use, and found that the rumor that they were not secret ballots was not borne out. If the same ballot was used in Kingston as in North Toronto, he could not see how there was any chance of ascertaining how people voted. When the ballot papers were brought down they would understand more about it than now. If anything was wrong in respect to the act passed one year ago to abolish the numbered ballots, hon. gentlemen opposite were as responsible as the Government side. They had had every opportunity of amending the measure at any point they thought

it wrong. He was not prepared to admit that the ballot used at Kingston was not the same as in North Toronto, and if it was there was no method of tracing the way in which voters cast their ballots.

Should Adopt Federal Ballot.

Hon. Mr. Ross said that when the bill was before the House last year the thought in the mind of all was that the numbered ballot was being abolished. If a vote could be traced, and the hon. member for Kingston had pointed out there was a possibility of that, then the intention of the Government and of the whole House was defeated. Mr. Ross, referring to Hon. Mr. Foy's remarks, reiterated the explanation of Mr. Pense as to the manner in which a vote could be traced. He urged that his suggestion of last session, namely, the adoption of the ballot used in Dominion elections, would be the best course. On that ballot the number is on a counterfoil. When the voter returned it to the returning officer after marking his vote the counterfoil was torn off and thrown away before the ballot was put into the box, so that there was no means of identification. If this was adopted the Government would remove themselves from the suspicion that the numbered ballot was being continued. This was not a party or political question, and should not be dealt with as such.

Hon. Mr. Hanna's Denial.

Hon. Mr. Hanna gave a most explicit denial of the reported investigation mentioned by Mr. Pense. There had been no such investigation at the instance of the department. Since Mr. Pense had mentioned the matter, he (the speaker) had seen the inspector of asylums in regard to it, and he, too, had told him that no such investigation had ever been held, to his knowledge. Mr. Hanna declared he would make inquiries of the superintendent to see if that official had held such an investigation. Continuing, Mr. Hanna said that ten days or so prior to the bye-elections he had taken pains to notify those in the Government institution at Kingston who had votes that they had absolute

liberty, without fear or favor, to go to the polls and record their votes as they pleased. He had yet to learn of one act on the part of the Kingston officials inconsistent with those instructions. Mr. Hanna, with a smile, expressed regret that Mr. Pense and the Kingston hotelkeepers were not on good terms. In concluding, Mr. Hanna said that in the past the now Opposition had retained a ballot by means of which the vote of every man could easily be traced, without any tax on the memory, simply by checking off the books. Now they were complaining that by a feat in memory one or two votes might be traced.

Exportation of Natural Gas.

In reply to Mr. Jessop, who inquired had the Government taken any action in order to stop or limit the exportation of natural gas from Ontario into the United States of America, and, if not, was it the intention of the Government so to do, Premier Whitney stated the matter was now under consideration.

The San Jose Scale.

Hon. Mr. Monteith, replying to Mr. McCoy, said application had not been made to the present Government for compensation for the destruction of fruit trees infested with San Jose scale. In 1905 the Department of Agriculture conducted for the benefit of the fruit growers experiments in the use of spraying materials, and carried on demonstrations at certain points in methods of spraying. The continuation of this work was now under consideration. In 1905 the department also supplied applicants with spraying materials at wholesale rates, and paid transportation charges thereon. It was no longer deemed necessary that this assistance should be given by the department.

Commercial Travellers' Tax.

In reply to Mr. May, Hon. Mr. Matheson stated that there had been some correspondence with the Province of Quebec respecting the statute of that Province requiring certain commercial travellers to take out a license, and there had been considerable modifications made for Ontario travellers. It was not the intention of the Government to introduce similar legislation.

Niagara Falls Preservation.

In reply to Mr. Harcourt, Premier Whitney stated that cognizance of all the steps in connection with the preservation of Niagara Falls and any rights possessed therein by the Province, both in respect of international correspondence and newspaper reports, had been taken, but no correspondence on the subject had passed between the Dominion and the Provincial Governments.

Stationary Engineers' Bill.

Mr. Carscallen's (Hamilton) bill to enable the examination of stationary engineers and the granting of certificates of qualification was read a second time and referred to a special committee, to be appointed to-day. In addition to the mover the bill was discussed by Messrs. Harcourt, Matheson, Rathbun, Fraser, Whitney, Jamieson, McCoig and McNaught. Opinions differed with respect to the measure independent of party lines. The bill provides that certificates shall be required from engineers in charge of engines of fifty horse power or over.

By request of the city of Ottawa authorities Mr. McDougall withdrew his bill to amend the separate schools act.

The Election Act.

Mr. Duff's bill amending the Ontario election act provides that returning officers in future be appointed by the Lieut.-Governor from the voters of the electoral district for which the election