

NEW ELECTION ACT READ FIRST TIME.

Hon. Mr. Foy Places Measure Before Members.

AN INDIAN FRANCHISE.

Efforts Being Made to Prevent Corruption.

Hiring Vehicle For Taking Voters to Poll to be Made Illegal—False Statements as to Candidate's With- drawal a Corrupt Practice—Pen- alties For Election Offences More Severe.

The election act introduced by the Attorney-General, Hon. J. J. Foy, and read a first time, was the feature of a brief sitting of the Legislature yesterday. This act is entirely a new issue, and the old act is to be repealed. The chief object is to make the Provincial law correspond with the Dominion election act. The same machinery for elections will be provided, and thus officials are prevented from becoming confused in the two laws. An important change is the adoption of the Dominion ballot. The new ballot will bear on its face the names of the candidates separated by heavy black lines, and on the back space is provided for the deputy returning officer's initials and stamp. There will be a counterfoil and stub attached to each ballot, the counterfoil to be torn off before the ballot is put in the box, so that, except in a special case provided for, no ballot can be identified.

Guard Against Errors.

The act abolishes the voters' list at present written in the poll book. This list usually was compiled from the revised voters' list, but so many cases occurred where it was found names had been omitted that this provision has been struck out, and in its stead deputy returning officers will use the revised voters' list itself. If an attending voters' name does not appear in that list he cannot vote; neither can he, as under the old act, tender a ballot.

An Indian Franchise.

An important innovation is the granting of the franchise to Indians who are not living with any band or on an Indian reserve. Participation in Indian grants does not constitute a disqualification. Temporary absence from a municipality will not disqualify a voter, if the act is passed as framed, and a right to claim a re-count is given regardless of what the majority in the election may be. Under the old act a re-count could not be claimed except in cases where the majority was under 200. Application to a candidate when an election is pending for a Government position or the promise of such a position is made a corrupt practice, as is also impersonation under the manhood suffrage act. The keeper of a livery or any person who furnishes for hire conveyances on polling day, knowing that they are to be used for taking voters to the polls, will be held to have been guilty of corrupt practice.

No More False Statements.

The circulation of false statements as to the withdrawal of a candidate will

render the person responsible liable to a prosecution. The definition of what constitutes a corrupt practice has been considerably broadened, and the penalties made much more severe. In the case of an equality of votes the returning officers must give a casting vote, the right to use their discretion in this matter being withdrawn.

Claiming Personation.

The only condition under the act which permits the use of a ballot that can be identified is that arising when a voter might claim to have been person-

ated. In such a case a voter would receive a ballot marked for identification, which must be placed in the ballot-box.

Controverted Election Act.

Another important bill which was introduced by the Attorney-General and received its first reading was that to amend the controverted elections act. The object of the act is to make the trial of election petitions as simple as possible. Under the law as it stands at present only certain Judges can try election petitions. The new bill abolishes this rota of Judges and permits election petitions to be tried by any two Judges of the Supreme Court. Another change is to permit the trial of an election petition or an appeal in regard to an election case to go on, notwithstanding the dissolution of the Legislature.

Supreme Court's Work.

The sole right to decide the validity of an election is reserved to the Supreme Court, and no election can be questioned except under the provisions of the act. So far as this is concerned, the drawers of the bill have followed the English act. The right of the House to take up questions of validity of an election is abolished, but the power of the House to disqualify members is not interfered with. The bill also provides for the establishment of a summary trial court consisting of two Judges of the Supreme Court for the trial of cases in which corrupt practices are alleged.

The important change made in the bill to amend the act respecting inquiries concerning public matters, also introduced by the Attorney-General, is the provision that no commission is to issue for the holding of an inquiry during the session of the Legislature except with the consent of the House.

Essex Wants the Fine.

Among the petitions presented was one by Mr. J. A. Auld, South Essex, asking that the recent fine of \$25,000 against the Michigan Central Railroad, imposed by Mr. Justice Riddell, for criminal neglect, be paid over to the town of Essex. The action was the result of the recent dynamite explosion in that town. Numerous other petitions were presented, asking for the repeal of the three-fifths clause in the local option act. The following acts were also introduced by Hon. Mr. Foy, and read a first time:—Respecting the Executive Council; respecting the Legislative Assembly. By Hon. Mr. Hanna, an act respecting the registration of births, marriages, and deaths.

Make the System Modern.

Hon. Mr. Hanna, Provincial Secretary, has given notice of a bill respecting the registration of births, marriages and deaths in the Province. At the present time these returns are made half yearly, and it is understood that it is proposed to have these returns made quarterly, and in other ways make the general system of registration more modern.

Notices of Motion.

Following are the notices of motion: Mr. Hoyle, on Monday next—Bill to amend the assessment act.

Mr. Auld, on Tuesday next—Bill to amend the municipal drainage act.

The House adjourned till Monday afternoon.

THE POWER QUESTION.

HON. ADAM BECK HAS NO OBJEC- TION TO COMPETITION.

Thinks Hamilton Radial Company Should be Compelled to Supply Power to Small Communities Along its Route.

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

London, Ont., Feb. 7.—Hon. Adam Beck arrived back from Buffalo to-night, where he was the guest of the Liberal Club. Interviewed upon the statement credited to him that the Hydro-electric Commission did not desire competition in the furnishing of cheap power to the people of Ontario, Hon. Mr. Beck definitely denied having ever made the statement. "Our only interest as a commission in the Hamilton radial bill," Mr. Beck said, "is to see that the smaller communities shall obtain cheap power. To this end we propose to make agreements with the various electric railway companies, which will require that they, in return for the favorable rate, furnish power from their wires to the farmers and also to the villages and towns through which they pass. There is no such agreement proposed in the bill which the Hamilton Radial Company are endeavoring to get through Parliament, and if they succeed in obtaining a Dominion charter without this provision the interests of the people will not have been safeguarded as we believe they should be."

"Then it is not true that the commission are afraid of competition with their plan?"

"Not at all. We have no interest or concern in that phase of the question. What we are anxious to do is to see that the power is supplied to every possible consumer desiring it."

Hon. Mr. Beck said he believed that the Hamilton Radial Company should be required to furnish power to the farmers and communities in the district between Decew Falls and Hamilton and between Hamilton and Toronto, also along the route they propose to take from Hamilton west. "This Cataract Company make the boast that they have the cheapest power in the Province, although when we asked them for a figure they stated that they had no power to sell to us," said Mr. Beck. "A short time ago provision was made enabling them to increase by fifty per cent. the power they may take from Decew Falls, but no provision was made by the Dominion Government enabling any commission to regulate their rates or to control them in any way, or make it compulsory that they should furnish power."

WILL GO ON WITH APPEAL.

Government Proposals in Accord With Suggestions of Hon. A. G. Mackay.

It has been decided by the Provincial authorities to go on with the appeal in the Indian treaty case where the Province was sued by the Federal Government. The suit was originally begun two years ago, and recently a decision was handed out by the Exchequer Court by which the Province lost. The Dominion Government entered the suit to recover \$1,362,935, but the decision held the Province only liable for about \$300,000. The history of the case is that in 1873 the Dominion Government purchased 47,000 acres of land from the Sallaux Indians, agreeing to pay \$12 per year to each man, woman and child of the tribe. In 1888 an Imperial order-in-council made the land over to the Ontario Government, and the Dominion authorities sought to have the money spent before 1888 repaid, claiming that the Province should be responsible for it.