

of preparing a war-time voters' list in Toronto worked out as a disgrace to Union Government. The Union Government abolished patronage. That same Government was represented in Toronto by a small, incompetent organization. That organization left the Trail of the Serpent of Patronage over every move in the miserable game of playing with the manufacture of a war-time voters' list.

The appointment of the returning officers was Patronage.

The appointment of the enumerators was Patronage.

Toronto is disgraced by the Tragedy of the War-Time Voters' List. The joint authors of that Tragedy are the red-tape officials in Ottawa and the Patronage peddlers who pose as Conservative leaders in Toronto.

The language of the Toronto Telegram that the whole system of preparing the War-time Voters' List worked out as a disgrace to the Union Government exactly fits the case in scores of other constituencies as well, and yet this afternoon the Right Hon. The Prime Minister in his speech said that "there never was an election in Canada conducted more decently and fairly."

Now let us turn to the West and see what happened there. The most illuminating exposure of election misdeeds that has come under my notice was that contained in the speech delivered by the Hon. A. G. MacKay, of Edmonton, who spoke in that city in January last. That speech was published in full in the Edmonton Weekly Topics of January 11th, 1918, and it should be read by every person who is under obligation to familiarize himself with the possibilities of election crookedness under the War-time Election Act. It was followed by an article in the Edmonton Bulletin summarizing many of the details given by Mr. MacKay, and it will afford an idea of what went on generally among the election officials if I read a few paragraphs at the beginning of that summary, which were as follows:

The result of the polling in the electoral district of West Edmonton gives a substantial majority to the Hon. Frank Oliver as far as the home vote is concerned. This majority is entirely remarkable in view of the evident determination to disfranchise as many of the electors as would be necessary to win the election for the Government candidate. If he did not win it is only because the election officials fell down on their job. They could just as well have put enough on or left enough off to do the trick. Their only failure was they did not think they needed as many as they did. There are various ways of disfranchisement. One is by statute direct. That was done. Another is by empowering the enumerator to enfranchise and disfranchise. That was done. Still another is to so place the polls that they are out of reach of the voters. That was done. Still another is not to provide enough ballots at polls known to be favourable to the opposition. That was done. To deal only with the two last mentioned cases:

Grouard Poll No. 210.

There were 183 votes polled at Grouard poll No. 210, 153 for Oliver, 28 for Griesbach, 2 ballots were spoiled. The polling division extended for ten townships from south to north, and eight from east to west, that is, it was sixty miles by fifty, not including a vast northern and largely uninhabited area. The settlements within the area mentioned had been given seven polls at the provincial election last spring, and four in the elections of 1911. There were some 400 names on the voters' list. Whitefish Lake settlement, fifty miles by trail from Grouard, had been given a poll in the provincial elections, but no poll was given it in the recent election. Two voters traveled from Whitefish lake to Grouard and arrived in time to poll their votes, but five others who were on the way did not arrive until after the close of the poll owing to the day being very cold and stormy and the travel being consequently slow. The whole settlement, comprising about fifty voters, excepting the two mentioned, was effectually disfranchised by the refusal of a poll. From Indiana siding on the Dunvegan railway, where a number of fishermen were at work, the distance to the Grouard poll was over twenty miles.

The conditions at McLennan were almost exactly duplicated at Grouard. First, the people were disfranchised by the refusal of polls, and in case that would not be sufficient they were not given enough ballots. Only 150 ballots had been supplied at Grouard, although there were upwards of 400 names on the lists. The 150 ballots were exhausted about 2.30 p.m. After some delay the deputy returning officer permitted the use of substitute ballots by duly qualified voters. Thirty-three such ballots were used before the poll closed, and were counted by the deputy returning officer.

It may be mentioned that the Grouard settlement sent a very large proportion of men to the war.

Fahler Settlement, Polls 208 and 226.

The Fahler case has been stated in full already, but a resumé may be given. Fahler settlement occupies the greater part of the townships 77 and 78, ranges 21 and 22, west of the fifth meridian. Upwards of 400 homesteads are taken and a large proportion of the settlers are in occupation. The Dunvegan railway traverses the settlement from east to west. There were five polls in the settlement in the provincial election of last spring. No poll was given in the settlement at the recent election. The part of the settlement in range 21 was included in McLennan poll distant from six to eighteen miles. Range 22 was included in the Smoky River poll, distant twelve to thirty miles. An old trail through the woods had to be reopened to allow the voters to reach the poll at the Smoky. There was no population at the Smoky except two men at the railway pump house. A party of thirty-one voters of Fahler left home on Saturday, cut their way through the woods, reached the poll at noon on Monday, and voted. Twelve others who left on Sunday failed to reach the poll on Monday. All these voters had to camp outside for four nights in bitterly cold weather.

And in the face of that the Prime Minister this afternoon said: "Never was there an election in Canada conducted more decently and fairly." The article proceeds: