

say: 'What is the use of legislating unless you can make sure that people will not override the law?' Notwithstanding that this will be done to some extent, if we put a law upon the statute-book it will have an effect on the best class of people in the country. There are loose ideas in regard to the manner of conducting elections. Men who are honourable in every other relation of life have loose ideas as to how men should be expected to conduct elections. Many a man who in every other respect is a model citizen, will violate the election law in the most flagrant manner. It is our duty to do something, if possible, to instil in the mind of the average citizen a more correct appreciation of his duty in that respect. We know that the use of liquor in connection with elections is but too common. If we can do anything that will prevent that, and which will introduce a better system, we shall be doing a good work. Now, Sir, while the Controverted Election law is not immediately an issue here, I personally have somewhat radical views on that subject. I believe that the Controverted Election Act is not a very good piece of machinery. It seems to be designed largely to prevent inquiry into elections. We find that it requires a man to put up a deposit before he can go into court with a complaint, and no doubt that operates well at times, but all the same its tendency is to prevent inquiry into elections. I know the view which I am going to express is radical, and I wish to say that I am only speaking for myself, when I express the hope, that the time is not far distant, when instead of requiring a man to put up a deposit before he can have an election trial, that one of the first duties of the courts of the country, after an election, will be to inquire into these election matters voluntarily, and to hear every man who has a complaint to make, without waiting for the intervention of a private citizen. I do not know that our judiciary could be better employed for three months after an election, than in holding courts of inquiry into the manner in which an election has been conducted. That is a radical view, I admit, but if we are in earnest about this matter, we have to get away from the old-fashioned methods. Instead of putting obstacles in the way of a man going into the election court, let the doors be open so that the poorest citizen of Canada, if he believes there is wrong-doing in an election, shall be enabled to bring his complaint before a judicial tribunal. That view may be considered as advanced and radical, but at all events it is my view. Then as to the 'pairing-off' system; we all know that hon. members on that side, and hon. members on this side, while they are shouting for pure elections and for honest ballot, and so forth, will walk out behind the Speaker's chair, and agree to 'saw-off' their election petitions. I agree with the hon. member for East Grey (Mr. Sproule), that we should

Mr. FIELDING.

have different methods in that respect. The man who puts in an election petition should not do so unless he has some bona fide cause of complaint, and then he should not be allowed to withdraw that petition under this system of pairing off.

Mr. INGRAM. Would the hon. gentleman allow a person outside of the constituency who knows nothing about the facts to enter a petition?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. If he could make an affidavit that he was possessed of certain knowledge, he ought to be allowed to enter a petition. But, if I had my way, I would not wait for a petition at all. I am speaking for myself, when I say that I would make it the duty of a judge of the higher court, within one month after the holding of an election, to hold open court for every one who wished to come and make a complaint about the conduct of that election. That is a very advanced and radical view, I admit.

Mr. BERGERON. But you could not until the allegations are made.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I would not wait for any allegations to be made. I would have the court held at a certain date, and I would allow any one to come forward to make his complaint—just as we are doing now in another case—without waiting for an allegation. If you want thorough investigation into the conduct of elections, you must encourage that investigation, and not put obstacles in the way of it, as the present law does.

Mr. BERGERON. My hon. friend (Mr. Fielding), appears to be very serious in this matter.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I am very serious.

Mr. BERGERON. I agree with a good deal that the hon. gentleman has said. I agree that elections should be carried out fairly, honestly and honourably, but when he looks forward to the day when the judges of the land will, for three months after an election, voluntarily invite people to come before them and tell what was done during the election, I think the hon. gentleman has forgotten a good deal about what occurs at elections.

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I have been through some elections.

Mr. BERGERON. So have I, but with all due respect to the judges, and notwithstanding all the confidence I have in them, I shall do everything in my power to prevent the realization of such a scheme as the Minister of Finance indicates. We know how election petitions are engineered today. We know that in almost every case an election petition is not gotten up honestly, but that it is blackmailing, pure and