

to charge the government or any member of the government with this fraud, until it is brought home to them, but I believe that if the matter is thoroughly investigated it will be found that the provincial organization of the Liberal party is at the bottom of this wrong-doing. The government have the Dominion police force under its control, and they have ample means of finding out who supplied the enumerators with this document. The country will demand that the Minister of Agriculture shall have his chief enumerators placed on the stand under oath to declare who supplied these documents. A thorough investigation of that kind is the only means by which the government can clear itself. If they fail in this, the ministers will bring down on themselves the utter contempt of the people for such conduct. Even their own party organs to-day have condemned the thing. The law declares that these enumerators must not exact any further information than is on the schedule. It clearly says in section 11: 'And no other such information.' Is there anything to be found in the schedule about asking a man what his politics are? Not at all. Whoever was at the bottom of this fraud had not only in mind the obtaining of an advantage for the local government, but they are asked to make inquiries of men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, so it is plainly intended that when the next Federal elections come on, the Liberal party in the Dominion should have a knowledge of the politics of the men who shall then be twenty-one, so as to help them in the preparation of their lists. In the famous circular issued by Mr. Côté, chief commissioner for the province of Quebec, he states that all this information is obtained under oath, and as I have not yet seen the form of the oath, I shall reserve my remarks on that point until later. I do trust that the Minister of Agriculture will rise in his place to-night and announce that he will institute a thorough investigation in order to please his friend, the Montreal Witness, and in order to give Liberals as well as Conservatives throughout the country an assurance that the perpetrators of this gross fraud shall be discovered and punished. This government is fond of commissions. Let it produce its enumerators before a competent commission, and let it discover who is guilty of this infamous act. Surely, there must be some law in this country to punish the men who are caught red-handed perpetrating this fraud.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. I have stated already, and the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett) no doubt accepts my statement, as I am sure the committee will, that I knew nothing whatever about this matter until it was drawn to my attention to-day in a copy of the Mail and Empire. I did not look to see what was the date of the copy, but I think it was the issue of last Saturday. I knew nothing whatever, and

I have not heard anything except what the hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett) has said, in regard to the debate in the Toronto legislature. I have not followed the proceedings there. I did not know the question was up there, and I did not see either Mr. Whitney's or Mr. Ross' statement in regard to it. To-day for the first time the matter was brought to my attention. I have stated, and I state again, that if anything has been done beyond the law and the requirements of the duties of the enumerators, they will be brought to task, and it will be seen by me as head of the department under which they are working, that they do their work legally, lawfully, and properly, according to the strict letter of the law which lays down their duties. If any of them do anything which is wrong and improper, they will be brought to book and prevented doing it in the future. As regards investigation, I will find out the facts of this matter, and will be guided by the facts I discover in my departmental search and inquiry.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I have made some inquiries in regard to this matter, and I am informed by a member of the Ontario legislature that it was practically admitted in the debate there, that these forms had been supplied to the census enumerators.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. By whom?

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I do not know. I am not charging the hon. gentleman. It does not make any difference by whom. It has been done by some person, and if this circular which has been sent out by the hon. gentleman's department and for which he assumes responsibility, the circular signed by Mr. Côté, if that is correct, then whoever put this into the hands of the census enumerators was asking the census enumerators to commit perjury. The circular sent out by Mr. Côté declares that the enumerators are sworn to secrecy. Any census enumerator who undertook to supply the information asked for in this political memorandum which the member for Simcoe has brought to the attention of the House should instantly be dismissed from the position. Any census enumerator who undertook to act upon it without reporting to the hon. gentleman's department with respect to it, is unworthy to hold his position. Not only has the enumerator been asked to commit perjury, but he has been asked to defraud the government, for this reason, that every one of these men is paid by the day, and he is expected to have these circulars filled out during the time for which he is paid by the government. The result is that whoever has put these circulars into the hands of the census enumerators for the purpose of having them filled out, and then sent to Liberal members or to unsuccessful Liberal candidates at the last election, is asking that those enumerators shall commit perjury and also commit fraud on this