

women the right to vote, my hon. friend would not be here.

Mr. BUREAU: The women prevented the opposition of the friends of my right hon. friend.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: My right hon. friend, I believe, is distressed by other features of that enactment—more concerned by them than he ever was by any desire that the men overseas should vote. But I do not intend to enter into any discussion of what took place at the last session; we shall have enough to occupy ourselves with at the present session. So, let that past attend to itself. Let us go ahead and do our duty in this Parliament as it lies before us.

My right hon. friend ventures to say to me that partisan returning officers and enumerators were appointed. I have been in this House for nearly twenty-two years, I have passed through six general elections, and I never passed through an election the methods of which were not discussed and criticised, at the first session of the following Parliament, by the party which lost. But I have never heard any hon. gentleman go so far as my right hon. friend has gone to-day. I want to tell him that I issued a statement, which was circulated through the press of Canada near and far, asking that the returning officers should select enumerators of both political parties, and that equal representation should be given to all interests in the country; in that selection, and in the selection of returning officers themselves, I endeavoured so far as I was able, to have that principle carried out. That is the first time such a course was ever pursued in Canada. The leader of the Opposition would never have dreamed of doing it. Men within the sound of my voice have come to me more than once and complained that by reason of the appointment of returning officers and enumerators opposed to the Government they had lost hundreds of votes and their election to this House had been endangered. I venture to say that since the history of this Confederation there never was an election in Canada conducted more fairly and decently than the recent one.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Possibly the subject which excites the mirth of my hon. friends is the denial of free speech in some parts of the country. My right hon. friend has referred to a supposed conspiracy to defeat Mr. Oliver. By whom does he allege that that conspiracy was made or carried on? He has said either too little or too much.

If he has any charge to bring against the Government, or against any member of the Government, or against any official of the Government, let him go further and make his charge and we shall have it investigated. That is the way to deal with such matters, if my right hon. friend has anything to complain of. He regards the defeat of Mr. Oliver as due to a conspiracy, because in three polling divisions, I think, out of about 150, some alleged irregularities may have taken place. I have just been informed that ballots enough for all the voters upon the list were placed at the polls to which my right hon. friend has alluded, and that those who came and demanded ballots were, in many instances at least, persons who were not upon the list. I knew nothing of this matter and heard nothing about it until my right hon. friend alluded to it. As I have said, if my right hon. friend wants any investigation into the matter, the counts are open to him, or the procedure of this House is open to him.

My right hon. friend sees fit to suggest that there has been some plot or conspiracy in connection with the voting of soldiers in Canada, and he even insinuates—and I hope he will permit me to say that I think the insinuation was unworthy of him—that men were put in khaki in order that elections might be won. As I understand the matter, the statement of the Minister of Militia and Defence to which my right hon. friend alluded, did not include the men in hospitals, the returned soldiers, the soldiers home on leave; it included only those who had been raised and recruited in Canada in order that they might proceed overseas, and therefore the supposed anomaly to which my right hon. friend alluded might easily have been cleared up if he had seen fit to make a little further inquiry.

I do not know as to the cries which he says were used in some parts of the country. There may have been cries here and there that were unworthy. There was no such cry put forward on behalf of the Government, so far as I know, either here or overseas. I do not think my right hon. friend will find it in his heart to say that the overseas men voted in favour of the Government and against him by reason of any compulsion or pressure put upon them. They are men who would keenly resent any attempt to place compulsion upon them. I believe that they voted against my right hon. friend because they attributed to him some such spirit as that which I found running through his speech, a spirit which at-