

appealed to me and I also appeal to him. I appeal to him in the name of fairness, of broad equity, of natural justice, to help us to frame an Act which will place the whole machinery of the preparation of the lists under judicial authority so as to give satisfaction to Grit and Tory and so that when an election takes place sooner or later the voice of the people absolutely untrammelled may be given expression to. That is the position which we take and that is the position which we place before the House and before the country.

Mr. FOSTER. My right hon. friend has not said anything about the ballot.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. On that question I must say that in my opinion very little justice has been done to my hon. friend the Minister of Justice. There is no such intention as has been attributed to my hon. friend to try and tamper with the secrecy of the ballot. What we have in mind is to prevent if possible a recurrence of what has taken place when the voice of the people in certain elections has been baffled and set aside by the intervention of mere technicalities. I have to say that upon this point and upon every other point of this Bill we are prepared to receive suggestions, to amend the Bill if necessary so as to give effect to the policy contained in it, which is the secrecy of the ballot without stifling the voice of the people as pronounced by them. Should we say that it is impossible to prevent what has taken place in certain constituencies; should we say that we cannot frame an Act which will preserve the secrecy of the ballot and at the same time to prevent a recurrence of such a thing as that a man who has been honestly elected to this House by the people could not take his seat?

Mr. ALCORN. Has the right hon. gentleman mapped out or has he in mind any modus operandi by which his new lists will be made altogether under judicial authority.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think so. I think we will be prepared to do so at the proper time when we are in committee.

Hon. G. E. FOSTER (North Toronto). Mr. Speaker, the debate upon this Bill has been proceeding now well on into the second week, and up to the present time we on this side of the House have been noting particularly the evidence and testimony adduced which might be considered a sufficient basis upon which the very drastic legislation contemplated in this Bill has been founded. The evidence and testimony upon which to base legislation of this kind ought to be, I think, more than hearsay and more than mere assertion. Now, whether we are right or wrong, from the time the Minister of Justice took his feet to explain this Bill until the last gentleman on that side of the House finished his speech last evening, I

am free to say for myself that the evidence and the testimony has been of the most unreliable, illusory and unsatisfactory nature. I am on my feet to declare that if you submit the speech of the Minister of Justice to a critical analysis, what with the actual misrepresentation of facts, what with the hearsay and allegation of what might have been or what might not have been, take those all out, and you have scarcely anything left, in that speech. I had thought to submit a little analysis of it, even at the risk of repeating what was so well done by my friend Dr. Schaffner, from Souris, last night; but it was done to a very thin House. Then we have the hon. gentleman from Lisgar (Mr. Greenway), who was an actor in the legislative and political history of Manitoba, from whom we ought to have had precept upon precept and line upon line and proof for every assertion. Boil down the speech of my hon. friend from Lisgar, and you reduce it in the main to a mere froth of assumption and of hearsay. Then I followed very closely that most remarkable exhibition, the speech of the member for Winnipeg (Mr. Bole). I understand that that hon. gentleman does not propose to go back again to Winnipeg to ask for the suffrages of the people. If this last performances of his in this House can have any weight, ought to be taken into consideration, is it too much for me to say that I think the people of Winnipeg may well be congratulated? Then, I listened, and read after listening, the speech of the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Crawford), and I defy any one to take that speech and thoroughly analyse it, and find any large basis of fact in it. And to-day I have listened to the speech of my right hon. friend the leader of the government, and, Mr. Speaker, I ask you, just fresh from that speech, where is the body of proof given by my right hon. friend upon which to base a grievance sufficiently large and sufficiently grave to justify this House in adopting this drastic legislation which he has proposed. If there had been an investigation into alleged grievances in Manitoba, with reference to the work of the registration clerks or with reference to the work of the revising officers, and if out of that investigation, carried on fairly, reasonably, and according to terms of law, there had been presented to this House sufficient evidence that a fraud was being perpetrated, that a hostile attitude was being taken by the legislature of Manitoba towards this Dominion government with reference to one-half of its people allied to his party, then, Sir, he would have had good ground upon which to base drastic legislation, and then the proviso stated by my right hon. friend and alluded to by my hon. friend at my side (Mr. R. L. Borden), that such a state of circumstances might arise in a province, in its attitude and in its action towards a