

Politics.
Date of Birth.
Month, Day, Year.
No. of Lot or House, Concession or Street.
Post Office Address.
Nationality.
Religious Denomination and Church.
Remarks.

May I ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture if these forms were supplied by his department to the census enumerators to be in turn handed to the sub-enumerators, or if he has any knowledge by whom they were issued?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Bennett) has referred to a circular which is one I saw published in the Mail and Empire either on Saturday or this morning—I forget in which paper it was. I may say that the document did not emanate in any shape or way from the Department of Agriculture over which I have the honour to preside, and until I saw it in the newspaper I knew nothing about it. I never heard anything about it or knew anything in connection with it.

Mr. BENNETT. I would like to ask the hon. minister, since its appearance, has he notified the enumerators that they must disregard this or any such document?

The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. As I only saw the thing this afternoon, I have not had an opportunity of doing so, but certainly I shall issue instructions to the enumerators employed on the work to ignore any such schedule or circular in connection with their work.

Mr. BENNETT. It is rather odd that the hon. minister has only seen this matter today or had his attention called to it. I notice that for several days past it has been coming in for condemnation at the hands of the public press, not only the Conservative press, but also the press of the Liberal side, the Montreal Witness, a newspaper which gives adherence to hon. gentlemen opposite, has been singularly strong in its condemnation of it. A glance at the document shows that it was issued in an official style from its very make up. The manner in which it was arranged goes to show that there is no doubt as to the reason why, in Ontario particularly, it has been entrusted to the enumerators. On the very face of it, it is plain why these circulars have been issued. In the first place, these enumerators, going about as they are through the country, obtaining the evidence that they are obtaining from parties, are in the best possible position to know who are between the ages of 16 and 21, and they will have the basis; the net-work for the form of the list in the province of Ontario for the next local election. The endorsement on the back of the document states that these circulars are to be handed to the enumera-

Mr. BENNETT.

tors, because it says to the two gentlemen in the subdivision, meaning thereby the enumerators who are to be appointed. It is clear, as I before said, that the whole game was to have these enumerators return to the provincial candidates, or the present member, or the defeated candidate for the Ross government, in Ontario, this information. The result is that they would be fortified by this information, which is almost indispensable to a political party, and they would have it done at the expense of the public treasury of Canada. That is a fraud on the treasury. It is a week ago since Mr. Whitney brought this matter to the attention of the Ontario legislature, and a few days ago the Montreal Witness said:

Mr. Ross was surely very unhappy in his treatment of this matter. Surely it is of some importance to a government that not its party, we hope, but some injudicious member of it, should be guilty of trying to persuade or tempt the census enumerators to perjure themselves, and surely if some of the enumerators who were strong party men were tempted to do so the result would be deplorable. Moreover, such a project on the part of one of the great parties or any considerable section of them, to make use of census information for party purposes, would be just the thing to confirm the dislike and distrust citizens have of giving information to census enumerators, which are already strong enough. It may have been intended by those who issued the circular that the census enumerators should obtain the information asked for separately from the census enumeration, but is it probable that they would inform the citizens that the particulars asked for were not for the census, but for the use of a political party, and thus confess the impertinence of the questions and their own impudence in asking them? If a government treats such affairs as this one as matters of no consequence, it is certainly losing its moral perception and will soon forfeit the confidence of right-thinking people.

It is strange that the minister has not heard of it before this late date. No one will believe that this document in its official form was got up by any single individual on his own responsibility, because it bears on the face of it the evidence that it was fathered by the Liberal political organization. It is the duty of the government to investigate to the bottom as to who has been guilty of this fraud on the public treasury. The minister has seen, no doubt, the statement made by Mr. Ross in the provincial legislature, and noticed the flippant manner in which he treated this very grave matter. If the minister (Hon. Mr. Fisher) will refer to the statute, he will find that the enumerators are sworn to do a certain duty, and yet in face of the fact that they are sworn to keep secret the information they get, some of the enumerators, as we have proof, are deliberately violating their oaths. The country will demand that the minister shall investigate this matter at once. The country will demand that this government shall not laugh the matter out of court, as Mr. Ross has attempted. It would be unfair