

the composition should be completed early in April, and the printing of the lists should be completed about April 15 next.

Mr. CAHAN: Will the hon. gentleman allow me?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend can make his remarks when he speaks later.

Mr. CAHAN: I say that is correct in the ordinary course of the work.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What does my hon. friend say?

Mr. CAHAN: I say that those lists can be completed any time within thirty-five days, but we are now doing the work in the ordinary course.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Why aren't they ready now?

Mr. CAHAN: Because the hon. gentleman as leader of the opposition agreed to a different arrangement for a different form of revision at a different date. He is as much responsible as any member of the government for the condition of which he complains.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend may seek to shift responsibility on to the leader of the opposition, but may I tell him that a government has to take responsibility for all the legislation it introduces and the consequences thereof.

Mr. CAHAN: And so has the leader of the opposition to take responsibility for acts of parliament in which he concurred.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I point out to my hon. friend that last summer when I saw that the government was deliberately delaying—

Mr. BENNETT: I ask the right hon. gentleman to withdraw that word. There was nothing done deliberately.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Then it was done without deliberation.

Mr. BENNETT: That is right, because it was in the hands of the franchise commissioner, who appointed franchise officers sixty per cent of whom were opponents of the government.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I take the Prime Minister at his word, at the moment. Without deliberation; I have no doubt done by himself—

Mr. BENNETT: No, I was out of the country.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Is it not a heroic thing on the part of the Prime Minister to seek to condemn the franchise com-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

missioner and put the responsibility on him especially when the franchise commissioner is a public servant and unable to be here to speak for himself? But it is not true the franchise commissioner was at fault in any way. What was the reason? The franchise commissioner proceeded the very moment he was able to proceed and did his work as expeditiously as it could be done. The reason he was delayed for a couple of months in beginning the enumeration was that the government of the day at the last session saw fit to repeal that section of the old act which provided for returning officers being in office continuously, and for the sake of party patronage introduced a measure which gave to themselves the appointment of returning officers. The franchise commissioner could not commence his work until he knew the limits of the constituencies, which were to be set forth by the returning officers, who were appointed, not by the franchise commissioner, but by my right hon. friend.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: When the house rose at six o'clock I was discussing with the Prime Minister, if I may use that expression, the question as to who was responsible for the delay in the printing of the lists. Until the lists are printed there can be no general election in this country, and the Secretary of State advised us as late as Friday last that it would be April 15 before the lists would be printed, assuming that there were no mishaps of any kind, such as a breakdown in the machinery of the printing bureau, which was one of the possibilities which he mentioned. I said that in my opinion the government was responsible for the delay in the printing of the lists, and I was rather surprised that the Prime Minister should take the ground that the franchise commissioner, who is not here to speak for himself and who is a public servant, was responsible.

Fortunately I had some correspondence with the Prime Minister on this matter last summer, because I rather anticipated that this issue would be raised. I did not think it would be raised with respect to a general election that might come in April, but it did occur to me that it might be raised during the by-elections which were to take place in the month of September, and that one of the arguments of hon. gentlemen opposite would be, as in fact it was during the campaign, that, even supposing their candidates