

must be, if it is to be an effective, a full and explicit communication. It takes time to communicate with your man whom you select in each constituency to do the enumerating or the registration. Then the duty is imposed on him, after he gets his instructions, of mastering the instructions and selecting sub-enumerators who are to work with him in that constituency. Is that a light duty? The Minister of Justice said that some of those constituencies were two hundred miles long by one hundred and fifty wide, and he sliced out a large portion of Ontario territory to show how big one of these constituencies in Manitoba was—the constituency of Selkirk. That means that the officer into whose hands you put this business, after he is communicated with, must select proper enumerators for a territory in that case two hundred miles long by one hundred and fifty miles wide. It means that he must make himself acquainted with the places where it is right there should be registration offices opened, and he must complete the whole complex system of getting enumerators through that territory and giving sufficient notice to the men who want to be put on the list. Can you do that in six, seven or ten days? Then you have to post your notices, if you are going to act with any semblance of fairness. You must not start a man off and tell nobody about it. When a Conservative asks where are you sending these men, you must not tell him that you are sending them away north without any definiteness. If you are going to act fairly at all, you are bound to give fair notice to the electorate—to every portion of it. That requires time. Then your enumerators have to fix a reasonable time within which to do the enumeration. Then they have to prepare their lists and send them to Ottawa and have them printed here and then these lists have to be sent back. That is a very large operation. My hon. friend proposes to do it within twenty-eight or twenty-six or twenty-four days. But there is another disadvantage. You are doing all that in the heat of a Dominion election, and you are saddling your candidates as well as your country with a large expense. You are saddling your country with large expense and your candidate with large expense and great exertions. Instead of devoting the twenty-eight days or less to the canvass of his constituency, he has to devote the best of that twenty-eight days to seeing that he is not ousted for want of proper enumeration. Is that fair to the candidate? It is most unfair to him; but it is mighty easy for the government and their officers to intimate to their own friends what is going to be done, as has been done over and over again, and give their own friends the mean, petty, miserable party advantage which such a course of conduct can give. But is it fair to the candidate? What was the great note

Mr. FOSTER.

that my right hon. friend and his colleagues struck in 1895 and from that down to 1898? It was the expense to the country. My right hon. friend was specially strong on that. Why have the country put to such large expense? There are the provincial lists, better than you can get yourselves, they are the common right of the province, and from a constitutional point of view the province should make the lists. There they are ready for you, you do not pay a cent for them, and the country is saved this large amount of money. And the amount of money spent by the Dominion in the preparation of the Dominion lists was paraded before the country as a strong argument against the Franchise Act of 1885. But that is what you have to do in this case. You have to send couriers to run at great expense and with great rapidity over every one of these constituencies in these two distant provinces, and the country has to pay the expense. There must be something pretty strong and pretty grave to make you do that. What else are you doing? You are making rush lists in an inopportune time for the people who wish to register. What is the most opportune time for the farmers and others to attend to registration in these western provinces? It is the months of May and June. That is the time when they are least occupied. But when will your elections come on? No one knows. They are apt to come on in October, and in that month it will be impossible to interest the farmers in the work of registration. In that month public interest will not be centred in that duty, and consequently the registration will be in the hands of partisans, and in their hands entirely. By having regular periods for preparing the lists you gain the still greater advantage of making that a settled thing. It gets to be a habit. To-day the greatest difficulty in political life in this country lies in the fact that a large proportion of the best people will not take sufficient interest in politics to have their names put on the lists. Do you remedy this by having rush lists? But your election may come on in January. A fine time you will have running over the constituencies in Manitoba in the month of January—running over a constituency two hundred miles long by one hundred and fifty miles wide and over the mountains of British Columbia in the months of January, February or March. What guarantee is there that your election will not come on in January or March? Under such circumstances a rush list put on in that way would be simply a farce. It will be an invitation to partisan discrimination and be the worst possible thing that could befall the electorate and the public life of this country. My right hon. friend asked is this not to be done in accordance with the law of the province. No, it is not. I say that it is absolutely impossible for it to be done