

hon. friend was at once alarmed and bellicose. He was alarmed because he saw in the unorganized districts of Quebec visions of Syrians, Italians, and other foreigners being put on the lists along the line of the Transcontinental railway. I think my hon. friend need not be alarmed upon this question. It is said that beauty is in the eye of the gazer. It looks very much as if scandal was very much in the eye of the gazer. Scandal exists in the imagination of my hon. friend and he believes that we have a sinister motive in view. If this Bill were passed and if authority were given in the unorganized portions of Quebec to have the lists prepared how could the Grand Trunk Pacific come into play?

Where would it be? Would it be the county of Montcalm, or of Joliette or of any of these counties which extend to the Hudson bay, or would it be beyond the mountains? How could the registration officer or the revising officer go to the line of the Transcontinental Railway in order to make a list? I do not think that argument of my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) is very serious, but he made a plea to maintain our system and with that idea I am very much in accord, when the system is right. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Monk) argued that in the province of Quebec there is no unorganized territory, because if a territory is unorganized it is placed under the jurisdiction of a county council. Let me explain to the hon. gentlemen from other parts of Canada that our municipal system in Quebec is the same as in Ontario; we have local councils in every municipality, our municipalities are townships, villages and parishes, and the mayors of all the local municipalities are the members of the county council. But there is a provision in our municipal code, peculiar to that code so far as I am aware, which says that if there is in any county a territory which is unorganized it is placed under the supervision of the county council. That is a very wise provision, but I do not think it can be construed to the length my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) would construe it. I understand that the county council has jurisdiction over all municipal matters which are to be found within the code—for instance, if the unorganized territory in any of these counties needs roads, the county council would deal with that, or if there is a by-law to be passed in favour of the prohibition of the liquor traffic the powers of the municipal council would apply to that. But I fail to see within the four corners of the municipal code any provision which gives to the secretary-treasurer of the municipal council the duty of making electoral lists in those territories, and in our province these lists are prepared by the secretary-treasurer under the supervision of the council. This power is not given to them under the municipal code but by the Electoral Act, which says:

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The secretary-treasurer of each municipality shall, between the 1st and 15th day of the month of March, annually make in duplicate subdivided for each polling subdivision a list in alphabetical order of all persons who according to the valuation roll then in force in the municipality for municipal purposes appear to be electors by reason of the real estate possessed or occupied by them in any manner within the municipality or by reason of being otherwise qualified as set forth in article 9.

Does my hon. friend (Mr. Monk) believe that this article which places on the secretary-treasurer of local councils the duty of preparing these lists, can be applied to the secretary-treasurer of the county councils. I have very serious doubt as to that. I have not had an opportunity yet of conferring with the Minister of Justice on that question, but if my hon. friend's view is correct I will be more than pleased; if his view is correct the province of Quebec would be beyond the jurisdiction of this Act and that should be satisfactory to him as it is to me.

With regard to the other provinces I do not think I should say much more.

Now, revising the whole question it is beyond doubt that we should have an election law; that we should improve the electoral Act, that we should give satisfaction to public opinion which has imperatively demanded a new election law. Viewing the debate as it has proceeded up to the present, I think I can say that no system of preparing the lists will be satisfactory to this side or to the other side if it is to be made for party purposes either by the Dominion government or by any provincial government.

Mr. BOYCE. In view of the very grave irregularities which have been pointed out and proven with regard to the making up of voters' lists in the unorganized territory of Ontario, would the right hon. gentleman suggest whether there is to be any improvement in the law?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. As I stated a moment ago, if it be agreeable to my hon. friends on the other side I am disposed to leave the preparation of the lists in northern Ontario, not to any partisan officer, but to place it altogether under the control of the judges. That I am prepared to do.

Mr. BOYCE. What judges?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. We will come to that when we are in committee. I shall be only too glad to receive the suggestion of my hon. friend (Mr. Boyce). I am not entering into this with any preconceived opinion; I am disposed to receive the suggestion of my hon. friend and perhaps I will be glad to avail myself of his services. We are all interested in this question. In conclusion I have simply this to say—my hon. friend the leader of the opposition has