

be good enough to explain how the introduction of a hit-and-miss selection by ballot is going to add to the fairness of selection?

Mr. OLIVER: My hon. friend is pushing his inquiries very closely, and if I am compelled to answer him I will say very frankly that the system of selection by ballot has been considered the fairest system since the foundation of the world and since people began to count.

Mr. MEIGHEN: How does it apply unless there are more men available, after all useful and necessary occupations have been filled, than the number of men required? Does my hon. friend think there are more men available after all useful and necessary occupations have been filled, than are required here?

Mr. OLIVER: I am sorry to say that I do not. I think the condition of our country at the present time is such that we need all the men we have. But, very properly, we have made up our minds to send more men, and in doing that I say that we should be scrupulously exact in making our selection on principles of absolute fair play. But when I look into the Bill and make inquiries of the Solicitor General I find that there is no provision whatever in the Bill for fair play as between man and man, as between occupation and occupation, or as between section and section of our country. Now I say, unless it is possible to so embody the views of the Government in regard to selective conscription as to give that assurance to the people, they should not have brought in the system, or they should bring in some other system under which it would be possible for us to guarantee fair play to those we represent. I am sorry to say, I am not able to do this under the provisions of this Bill, because I have not, as a matter of fact, the same faith in the fair dealing in any act of administration on the part of my hon. friend and his colleagues as I would have in what the Premier calls the blind system of choice by ballot.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have only to observe that I failed to get any statement from the member from Edmonton as to how he would divide the one hundred thousand men among the different provinces of Canada. Secondly, I was not convinced that under a state of affairs where we required all the men not necessary for the essential productions of the war, the introduction of a system of luck is going to add to

[Mr. Meighen.]

the fairness in getting the men who are required. I simply laid these two sentences before the House. I do not think the matter admits of further discussion.

Mr. OLIVER: My hon. friend has stated that this provision is based upon the British law, and he says that in as much as the British law has worked well under corresponding circumstances, this law should work well here. I had the honour to read to the House some little time ago what appeared to me to be reliable information as to the working of the British law, and I may perhaps be pardoned if I re-read some part of this information. I think it will be agreed that if this information is even measurably correct, it not only bears out everything I have said in expressing doubts as to the possibility or the probability of fair play in the administration of this measure, but it absolutely assures that fair play is not to be expected under that administration.

Mr. BURNHAM: The hon. gentleman is laying an indictment on a most important question before the House, and does not specify one thing. In broad general terms he sweeps the whole Act right out without specifying a single thing. Surely the indictment must be gone into and the evidence submitted to a grand jury like this, or the complaint will not hold.

Mr. OLIVER: I like to hear the sound of my hon. friend's voice. The evidence I desire to bring before the House in regard to the administration of this unrestricted selective provision in England is contained in the correspondence of one Lacey Amy, which appeared in the Toronto Saturday Night of June 16. Mr. Amy says:

Tribunals all through the country continue to hand out exemptions to huntsmen, variety artists, store managers, clerks, luxury manufacturers, frankly declaring that their mission is "to protect local industry." One district alone granted 30,000 exemptions during the past fourteen weeks.

Mr. BURRELL: Will my hon. friend permit me. I think this is rather a serious criticism, and the House is entitled to know the status of Mr. Amy. That is a very sweeping statement to make.

Mr. OLIVER: A very sweeping statement, Mr. Chairman, in regard to a very important question. I am not responsible for Mr. Amy. He is the regular correspondent of Toronto Saturday Night, and I presume is a reputable person. Saturday Night has a very wide circulation throughout the Do-