

Bill requires that on the day of polling the enumerators shall hand their lists to whoever is in charge of the poll, but after the lists have been handed to the deputy returning officer, any man or woman, notwithstanding that his or her name is not on the list, can, if willing to take the prescribed oath, exercise the right to vote, and that ballot is put into the ballot box along with other ballots to be counted along with the rest, and there is no way of distinguishing it from any of the others. I am sure that my hon. friends, when they stop to think what that procedure means, will hesitate to give it permanent expression in any legislation. I confess that it made me feel sad at heart when I read that particular provision.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: Buck up.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: "Buck up" my right hon. friend says. I shall "buck up," my hon. friend need have no fear. But I was sad at heart for the reason that if there is one purpose above another we should seek to accomplish in legislation of this kind it is to find a means above suspicion to give to the people the right to exercise the franchise fairly and honestly, and I despaired of that when I saw this provision.

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: When we come to those details—and of course they are details—then we can thresh them out.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am glad to hear my right hon. friend say that we can thresh out those details, because I am sure he is already feeling that it is a great mistake to have ever had the Bill drafted in that form—

Sir GEORGE FOSTER: I am not saying that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: —for it certainly shakes confidence not only in the legislation as it will be when finally enacted, should these provisions stand, but to a certain extent in the Government's intentions, when it brings down a measure of that kind. I desire to be the last to entertain distrust of the Government's intention to do other than what it has professed to be its wish, namely, to put an Act on the statutes which will be above suspicion.

Before I leave this particular feature of the Bill I wish to point out that as the Bill now stands any group of men could go into any rural riding, demand at one poll the right to vote, be given that right by the returning officer, exercise that right, and

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

then go on to the next poll, and the next, and so on, for as many polls as they are willing to attempt, and vote in every one. They might be men of no character, men brought from the country to the south out of quarters of cities where only men prepared to perjure themselves could be found. The Bill as it is drawn invites irregularities of that kind, because it makes possible through the act of perjury the winning of any riding in a rural district where the opposing parties are at all evenly matched. We should be the last to pass any measure which will tend not only to destroy the confidence of the electorate in the machinery of elections, but which will also tend to foster irregularities and crime. There should be finality in the matter of the preparation of the voters' lists and the possibility of revision before some regularly constituted authorities.

Now, Sir, apart from the features of the Bill which I have already dealt with, the only other general feature mentioned by my hon. friend is the machinery provided for the conduct of elections. I think in that respect the Bill follows pretty much along the lines of the legislation we are accustomed to, and in so far as that is the case, no exception can be taken to it.

There are a few innovations in the Bill, such as the provision for the appointment of a general electoral officer, the separation of nomination and polling days by an interval of fourteen days instead of the customary seven, and one or two other minor features. Doubtless the Government has reasons for introducing these innovations and will give them when the Bill is in Committee.

With the exceptions and possibilities I have pointed out, there are features of the Bill which all will be prepared to commend, and I have only to repeat what I said at the outset, that in discussing this measure at the present time we of the Opposition wish to approach the Government in the spirit in which the hon. Acting Solicitor General (Mr. Guthrie) has said he is desirous of having the Bill considered. All we want is a fair Bill, a Bill that will be effective and make the machinery of elections economical, a Bill which when it is upon the statutes will help to restore on the part of the electorate confidence that their will is being expressed and not frustrated by any electoral device—a Bill that will be honest and just. If we can get that we will be not only doing a service to the