

ish Columbia and Manitoba franchises and that of the unorganized territory in Ontario and Quebec, take them from the provincial authorities and jurisdiction, and hand them over to the partisan officers of the Dominion government; for we must take the Bill exactly as it is, and on the face of the Bill that is plainly written. We can also interpret the Bill by the past action of the government, and I propose to cite some instances of the past action of the government under a clause of this kind. What then was the principal proposal of the Bill? That which I have mentioned; but, Mr. Speaker, it was not an open proposal. It was a concealed proposal. It was a part of the Bill which was at first almost if not entirely ignored. When the Minister of Justice introduced his Bill he did not even mention, or if he mentioned it was very slightly indeed, this proposal in the Bill, and a person listening to his exposition of it as he introduced it would be absolutely ignorant that such a drastic and far-reaching and subversive proposal was concealed within the Bill. That was scarcely fair to the country or to the House. The country gets its idea of a Bill from its introduction by the responsible minister, and very many people, whilst they read the introductory remarks, probably form their opinion from these, and either do not have it shaken or do not see subsequent discussions which might shake it. That fact is patent; I do not think it can be denied. It was concealed as well as ignored, for when the second reading came to be moved, the same Minister of Justice devoted the largest part of his time to the grievance which was involved in the overlapping of the polling subdivisions, and it was a very small proportion of his time that he devoted to that portion of the Bill which gives this government through its partisan officers complete control of the lists of two provinces and of the unorganized territory in the two greater eastern provinces. That is patent; that cannot be denied. But the matter began to leak out when the supporters of the government came to discuss the Bill. Then very little was said about the overlapping clauses, but they pegged away at making a foundation if possible, to prove that the lists as they were prepared by the Manitoba authorities were unfair lists, unjust lists, incomplete lists, dead and decayed lists, and that no fair-play could be given to the party at present in power under these lists. And so, as man after man from the west arose, that point came to be prominent, until at last it overshadowed, as it should have overshadowed, every other provision in the Bill, in the estimation and desire of the government which introduced it. Today, then, we are discussing, and have been for the last week almost entirely that one proposition, that vital proposition. Well, Sir, what is that proposition, as we read it in the Bill? Am I going too far in saying

that it proposes to take the Manitoba and British Columbia lists, using them as a basis, whatever that may mean; and it proposes to go on, by its own revising officers and its own government and party machinery, to make a list; and it expressly states that the voters upon these lists, as finally prepared in that way, are the only persons who shall have a vote for Dominion elections in those provinces and territories.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. Will the hon. gentleman excuse me? There must be some misunderstanding in connection with this thing. As I understand it, the Bill does not disturb in any way the revising barristers in those provinces, and under the provincial lists the revising barristers are county court judges.

Mr. FOSTER. Now if the hon. gentleman will take his seat and exercise his patience, I will deal with that in a little while—two things which it will not be difficult, I am sure, for my hon. friend to do.

Mr. DUNCAN ROSS. I am asking for information, that is all.

Mr. FOSTER. I know that my hon. friend wants information, and, more than that, if he only knew it, he needs it. That, then, is borne on the face of the Bill as it appears in section 1. What does that involve? You talk about the old Dominion Franchise Law of 1885; but the lists that were prepared under that law were not rush lists, or emergency lists. They were lists provided for times set in advance, leisurely undertaken, leisurely carried out, not in the heat and turmoil of an election contest. What does this precious Bill propose? It does not propose that the Dominion shall stretch out its greedy hands and seize the franchise of these two great provinces until after the writs are issued. What does this mean? It means that when a writ is issued, within probably twenty-eight days from that time the elections are held. It means that these lists, if they are to be prepared in any way by means of which reasonable revision shall be had, have a very small portion of time in which they can be brought to the point of revision. It means that, as they must be printed and in the hands of the returning officers a reasonable time before polling day, the limit of twenty-eight days is considerably shortened. What have you? The writs are issued. Then this government has to communicate with their officers in every Dominion polling division in the unorganized territories of Quebec and Ontario, in Manitoba and in British Columbia. And these are distant places. What kind of communication can you have? Communication à la Mr. Richard Scott, by telegram and telegram only, without instructions of any kind? Is that the kind of communication which is to be had? It