

was that he had made the affidavits in the United States, and they were not the subject of a criminal indictment in Canada. He repeated the statements on oath in Canada, and still he was not indicted. Well, no prosecution has been taken against him from that day to this, he is still at large in this country. He has, in effect, challenged the late Ontario government and the Dominion government to take proceedings against him, but no step has been taken to that end. In the riding of West Huron one man, beyond doubt, switched twenty ballots at one poll. I was a member of the committee which investigated that matter. That man was a criminal beyond question. He was an officer of this House, he was a deputy returning officer, it was admitted that he was an officer of this House; but from that day to this he has gone scot free. My hon. friend who now represents Beauharnois (Mr. Bergeron) brought to justice certain of these scoundrels in the St. James Division, Montreal. Justice then did bestir itself, this administration bestirred itself, but it bestirred itself for the purpose of releasing from custody those men who had been committed to prison by the courts. I venture to think, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a subject for mirth, it is a subject for grave inquiry. These tools are not often punished. They seem to regard themselves as absolutely safe provided their party friends are in power and are in control of the administration of justice. The name of Canada should be famed throughout the world for the proper administration of criminal justice. Outside of these election frauds, I believe criminal justice is well and truly administered in Canada. But when has any government since 1896 whether at Ottawa or at Toronto, up to the recent change of government in that province—when has any government set its forces at work for the purpose of punishing these election frauds? The answer is, never, one exception, namely, that this government, in 1896, used funds from the public treasury of Canada to attack their political opponents in the province of Manitoba. I will leave to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of the Interior to explain why it is that these officials of theirs who have been guilty of this astonishing and unheard of fraud, should be now walking as free men in the west without any apparent fear of any criminal prosecution being brought against them?

There is one other subject, Mr. Speaker, upon which I desire to say a few words, and it is with regard to matters mentioned by the hon. gentleman who moved the address (Mr. Knowles). He referred to the insurance investigation. I do not look at that subject exactly in the way in which the hon. gentleman presented it to the House. I am not inclined to look askance at insurance companies. When they come for-

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ward and ask us to conduct a thorough examination, I think that is exactly what we might expect of honourable men who know that they have nothing to fear. I do not propose to be an alarmist in regard to this subject; I propose to consider none of these men guilty until they are proved to be guilty, and I do not for one moment suggest in advance that there has been anything wrong with regard to the conduct of insurance companies in Canada. But I think it was decidedly unwise for the government to forestall action by parliament just on the eye of calling parliament together. Public uneasiness has been referred to. It would have been proper, I think, for the government to consult the representatives of the people among whom that uneasiness exists and to learn from them something of the ideas of the people with regard to the investigation which should be carried on. The government have seen fit to depart from what I think would have been a wise course; they have seen fit to constitute a commission, and I desire now to raise my protest against the appointing of judges of this country to positions of that kind. I do not think it is in accordance with the statute which we passed last session. I have not a word to say against Judge McTavish. I do not know him intimately, I have but a passing acquaintance with him, but I believe him to be an honourable man and I have no doubt he is a man of ability. I have not one word of criticism with regard to him except one, possibly, that I shall mention a little later on; my criticism is of the system and not of the appointment of Judge McTavish. We passed in the closing hours of the last session of parliament a statute in which we placed these words:

No judge mentioned in this Act shall directly or indirectly, as director or manager of any corporation, company or firm, or in any other manner whatever, for himself or others, engage in any occupation or business other than his judicial duties, but every such judge shall devote himself exclusively to such judicial duties.

Now if this investigation is to be of the thorough character which we believe it will assume, how is it possible for Judge McTavish to devote himself exclusively to his judicial duties? It is true there are words in the preceding part of the section which must be held on a strict legal view to control the words I have alluded to, but I venture to say that the government has contravened the spirit, if not the letter, of this statute by appointing Judge McTavish. My hon. friend the Minister of Justice spoke of this practice two or three years ago and he deplored the appointment of judges to positions of this nature. I deplore it; I do not think it is a good practice. If we have to appoint judges in Canada to positions of this kind, if we cannot find men at the bar or in business in Canada to assume these