

latures and check their enactments from time to time. That simply brings us back to the principle that we ought to deal with this matter ourselves. But even if we do adopt the provincial law I would suggest that we should not go beyond saying that the provincial enactments, as they exist at present, and the basis on which the voters' lists are now made up in the different provinces, shall be the basis on which we shall proceed in the future. I do not see why we should pledge ourselves now to the wisdom of what any provincial legislature may pass in the future.

Who was that member of the House? He was then a member of the House, and is still a member of the House, who spoke in that way. That language was spoken by my hon. friend who was then the senior member for Halifax and who is now the leader of the opposition. I congratulate my hon. friend upon the soundness of the principle which he advocated then. I do not find any fault with him for having so spoken. His views were sound; I wish I could say the same to-day. He recognized a principle which had been affirmed by Mr. Fitzpatrick and which had been affirmed by myself and accepted by this side of the House. We held to the opinion that the preparation of the lists should be left in the hands of the provincial authorities; still, we had, in the language of my hon. friend the leader of the opposition, to keep watch over the provinces and if we found that conditions arose which would not be fair to this House then it would be our duty to resume our powers and to have the lists prepared by ourselves. Now, having laid down what appears to be the principle held by the two parties which should guide us in any emergency which should occur, I have to say that at this moment, in my humble opinion, a condition of things has arisen in the province of Manitoba which calls, and imperatively calls, for legislation by this House.

I place myself in the judgment of the House, nay, I place myself in the judgment of those gentlemen on the other side who have spoken in this debate when I assert,—in view of the facts which it shall be my duty to place before the House,—that we would be recreant to the duty we owe to ourselves and to the people of this country if we did not face the situation and pass the legislation which the condition of things now existing in Manitoba imperatively demands. There are, if I mistake not, forty or forty-two local constituencies in the province of Manitoba and the lists are prepared, not as in the east for each municipality in the constituency, but for the whole constituency. There are, therefore, lists for forty or forty-two local constituencies and there are only ten Dominion constituencies, and consequently when an election takes place for this House it becomes imperative to condense these forty-two lists into ten. That

is a serious work, it is work which involves a good deal of consideration but it is work that has to be done. The question is: who should do it? It has been observed by some members on the other side that there are not only in the province of Manitoba but in other provinces local constituencies the boundaries of which overlap the constituencies for the House of Commons. That is true, but it has never presented a serious difficulty elsewhere because in Quebec and Ontario, and also I believe in some of the other provinces, the lists are prepared for each municipality and in many instances for each polling division and under such circumstances there is no difficulty in adjusting the local lists to the federal constituencies. But in the case of Manitoba, under the conditions which prevail there, when the boundaries of the federal and the provincial constituencies overlap, the task of separating the voters' lists becomes one of serious difficulty. We thought we had provided for this in the Act of 1904 when we provided that this duty should be cast upon the returning officers. Section 25, revised statutes of Canada, says:

Where any provincial polling division, as constituted at the time of the receipt by the returning officer of the writ for an election, lies only partly within the electoral district for which such election is to be held, the part thereof within such electoral district shall, for the purpose of that election form a separate polling division, or it may be attached by the returning officer to an adjoining polling division; and the returning officer shall, as soon as possible after the receipt of the writ, prepare from the existing voters' list a separate voters' list containing the names of the persons entitled to have their names placed on the list for such part of such polling division.

The duty thus entrusted to returning officers proved to be of exceptional magnitude in Manitoba, and if I may use the expression, some of the returning officers shirked the duty and called upon extraneous aid to help and assist them in its performance. Some of them called upon Mr. Leach, who was Liberal organizer for that province. Now, I am free to say that it was certainly injudicious, most injudicious on the part of these returning officers to call for the services of the Liberal organizer of the province, because suspicion would arise at once that the work would be done unfairly. I say it was injudicious but I do not say it was at all criminal. There was nothing wrong in calling on the services of Mr. Leach if the work was properly, fairly, honestly and accurately done. If, on the other hand, the work was not fairly, accurately, or honestly done it mattered not who was called upon, the crime would exist. Now, some gentlemen on the other side of the House have taken the position, and they have ever maintained it in this debate,