

are too onerous. The bill contains a number of important provisions which should prove to be less exacting than the existing legislation. One clause permits of a pre-emption entrant receiving patent for his pre-emption as soon as he earns title to his homestead provided he pays the purchase price, \$3 per acre, and brings under cultivation the area of 50 acres now required. If he delays for any time to make payment he will have to show, when he tenders payment, that he has duly performed his duties up to that time. As the law stands at present a person who holds a pre-emption entry is not permitted to pay any portion of the purchase price therefor until the expiry of three years from the date of his entry receipt. Nevertheless, he is compelled to pay interest upon the principal during the time that it is not receivable by the department. A new clause of the bill relieves the entrant from paying interest during the three years following the date of his entry. Still another important provision is one allowing an entrant to keep stock on the land in lieu of breaking a certain number of acres, as provided for in the present act. There was absolutely no opposition to these proposals on the part of Western members, several of whom advocated still further concessions to the holders of pre-emptions and homestead lands.

W. A. Buchanan, of Medicine Hat, informed the minister that in his district there was an almost universal demand that the payment of interest should be abolished altogether. He said that if it is wise to remove the interest for a certain period it should be wise to remove it altogether. He desired to emphasize the fact that the proposed provision looks to be of more assistance to the man with money taking up a homestead or pre-emption with the object of getting his patent in order to make a sale

than to the man who wants to become a permanent settler. The same view was taken by W. E. Knowles, of Moose Jaw, who moved a formal amendment calling for the abolition of all interest charges. The minister of the interior did not appear to be particularly averse to the proposal and asked to have the clause stand-over for further consideration.

Inspectors as Political Workers

Hon. Frank Oliver, the former minister of the interior, was not opposed to a relaxation of the homestead regulations. He said that it was necessary to make changes to meet changed conditions. He maintained, however, that the government has taken a stand ever since it has been in office which has created a distrust in the minds of the people who are on the land in Western Canada that is reflected in the conditions of homesteading as shown by homestead entries statistics. The first act of this government when it took office, he said, was to make practically a clean sweep of the land administration and to establish from beginning to end an absolutely political administration, an organization for political purposes. We have had, he said, homestead inspectors absolutely canvassing for votes with candidates of the Conservative party and trying to intimidate voters in their positions as homestead inspectors.

Hon. Dr. Roche denied that any terrorizing had been done by officials of the department. Charges which had been made upon the floor of the house in regard to these men, he said, had been refuted. He believed that the homestead inspectors are doing their duty and are making thousands and thousands more inspections than were made by the homestead inspectors when the Liberals were in power. He said he had pointed

out to the officials their duties and had informed them that the department will not tolerate any activities in politics.

Mr. Knowles, in reply, said that the minister has had homestead inspectors who were a disgrace to the department. He has had land agents whom he has had to fire because they play the game too coarsely. He said that if the minister thinks that everything is going on well in the West he is in a fool's paradise. The people do not think so. The homestead inspectors are not doing their work. It was time, he said, the minister put his foot down and let his homestead inspectors know that he is boss; let them realize that they are there to do their work honestly; that their duty is to serve the men who are making the country, not the men on the patronage list or friends of the government.

James Douglas, of Strathcona, moved an amendment, the effect of which would have been to make the pre-emption regulations effective north of Township 44. This was negated on a standing vote of 37 to 26.

C.N.R. Debate This Week

Every day this week there has been tabled in parliament returns asked for by the opposition relating to the C.N.R. guarantee proposals. Like the resolution itself, they are of a decidedly technical nature and difficult for a layman to correctly unravel. They will doubtless be elucidated next week when the C.N.R. debate will open, and in the meantime it is just as well, from the standpoint of strict accuracy, not to attempt to deal with them.

One return, however, was quite clear and understandable. It consisted of letters or telegrams from provincial premiers, including the four Liberal premiers, practically asking the government to do something for the C.N.R.

REFERENDUM IN FAVOR

Out of all the partisan controversy over Home Rule, some progress has been made towards democracy; people have been educated to know the meaning of the referendum vote. The word "referendum" has been impressed upon the mind of every man. The referendum has been proposed by Premier Asquith to settle the Ulster difficulty. Mr. Balfour has advocated the referendum, to find out whether the majority of Britishers are definitely in favor of Home Rule. Lord Lansdowne, leader of the Lords, has endorsed the referendum, declaring himself as willing to abide by such a direct appeal to the people. The party method of holding a general election, and confusing the issue with a variety of partisan measures, is falling from grace. A year ago The Citizen advocated the referendum to decide the Canadian naval deadlock. Now, the Orange Sentinel says: "A general election cannot settle the Irish question. A plebiscite offers the only authoritative verdict that can be secured. And the Sentinel proceeds to expose the party game of pretending to hold a general election in one political question, as follows:

"Should the government prefer a general election to a plebiscite on the Home Rule Bill it must be because it knows the United Kingdom is opposed to the measure and it hopes the popularity of its general policy will overcome the unpopularity of the Irish policy."

As a diverting pastime, the reader might substitute the word "Naval" for "Home Rule," and "Canada" in place of "United Kingdom." Not forgetting, of course, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier—past master in the art of party politics—prefers the "good old British practice" (general elections) also.—Ottawa Citizen (Conservative).



GREAT ENTHUSIASM

Note.—Despatches in Government organs recently told how the Conservative party unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed the proposed \$45,000,000 bond guarantee to the C.N.R.