

before he claimed to have received it. The remarkable thing is that these papers bear evidence of having arrived here and of having been received by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, or some person on his behalf, four days before the date at which he states them to have been received. Now, I say that all these facts prove that, if necessity arose, the Government intended to take advantage of these delays. We went to the country under the disadvantage of the Franchise Act. Hon. gentlemen opposite expected that it would accomplish a great deal in their interest, and no doubt it did. But when the elections were close and there was some doubt as to the result, then they got ready to make this last move, in order, if possible, to prevent the will of the people from being made manifest. Now, I say that this man who is charged with this unfairness in the matter of gazetting the different returns, should either be allowed to appear before this House or before a committee of this House, in order to show whether he is guilty or not. Why, Sir, take the question of the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) that was put a few evenings ago, and take the answer that was given by the First Minister, and any fair-minded man will come to the conclusion at once that there has been some collusion between the Government, or some member of the Government, and that particular official. The question was as follows:

"Whether any member of the Ministry had any conversation, correspondence or communication of any kind, mediate or immediate, with the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, on the subject of gazetting the members elected to this House? If so, which member of the Government, and what was the nature of such correspondence, conversation or suggestion."

This question was put to the First Minister and he declined to answer it. He refused to give a reply. No doubt, if the Government had not really been guilty of collusion with this man, if they had had nothing at all to do with this unseemly and ridiculous business, why did not the First Minister get up and say so? What particular harm would there be in his saying the Government had no conversation or no interview with this officer? That would have cleared the skirts of the Government. But the First Minister could not do that, I presume. I suppose he felt it would be unwise and imprudent on his part to dare to load that official with the responsibility by saying that the Government had not had any conversation with him. Now, every one will come to the conclusion that the Government are responsible as well as the official for what has taken place. The official himself is undoubtedly responsible, because, no matter what influences may have been brought to bear on him, it was wrong for him to allow himself to be made a tool of by the Government for the time being. If he has permitted himself to be made a tool of, he does not deserve to occupy that distinguished position any longer, but he deserves, as implied in the resolution of the hon. member for Bothwell, to be dismissed. Any man in an official position that will stoop to be guilty of any act such as undoubtedly that official must be guilty of in the course he has taken in connection with this gazetting, certainly deserves to be dismissed. If this House is to be truly representative of the people, we must have an election law carried out in a manner that will be creditable to ourselves, and give the people a controlling voice in this House. If we are not going to have that, if we are going to have a continued system of political trickery from year to year, then we shall have to bear with it until such time as the people rise in their might and put a stop to it. I hope there are enough people in this country who are fair-minded and honest, to put a stop to this system, that they will condemn it, and those who practice it. Now, Sir, an hon. gentleman referred to the returns made in the Ontario elections, and tried to offset the charge that is being made against the Dominion Government, by the Local Government returns. The two cases are not in point, and for this reason: In Ontario the time for filing petitions

dates from the time they are received, and not from the time they are published in the *Gazette*. When the return is received by the Clerk of the House, the time begins to run within which a petition has got to be filed. In the case of the Dominion, from the date on which the return is gazetted, the time begins to run within which a petition may be filed, consequently all the advantage is in the hands of those that were gazetted early, as against those who were gazetted late. Now, Sir, there is an amusing thing in this connection to which I wish to draw the attention of the House, and that is in relation to the North-West returns. Up there the elections took place on the 15th March. The election returns for Alberta were received on the 4th April, and they were gazetted on the 9th. The first Saskatchewan return was received on the 9th April, and it was gazetted promptly on the 9th. The return from West Assiniboia was received on the 8th, and gazetted on the 9th. The return for East Assiniboia was received on 1st and gazetted on 2nd. There was no delay in any of those cases; the business was always put through promptly and there was not a minute's delay in the returns being placed in the hands of the Queen's Printer. The evasive answer given by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, that the papers were voluminous and considerable investigation had to be made which caused delay in gazetting, did not apparently apply to returns from the North-West, because no examination was made in those cases. There was not a return held over for a week, nor for any unnecessary time whatever. They appear to have gone straight to the *Gazette* on being received; but in the case of Ontario returns a system of discrimination appears to have been adopted and to have been carried out systematically. At first a few Reformers were gazetted with Conservatives, to give a color of fairness to the course of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, for if he had kept all Reformers off the lists the offence would have been too glaring. A few days ago the House considered the question with respect to the difficulty in the return for Queen's county. Hon. gentlemen opposite were very anxious to send that case to a committee and not have it judged by the House. Now, however, they wish this matter judged by the House and oppose its reference to a Committee. The truth is they adopt any course which seems to suit their purpose at the time. If it suited their purpose to send the question to a committee they would do so, but under the existing circumstances they think it will suit them best to have it dealt with by the House. Very possibly if the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery was examined on oath by the Committee on Privileges and Elections he might frankly say that he had been duped, that influences had been exerted over him and that he had carried out his instructions.

Mr. DAVIES. Hon. gentlemen opposite should not indulge in cat-calls.

Mr. MILLS. It is very unfair to act in that manner at this early part of the Session.

Mr. SPEAKER. I must ask hon. members to cease the noise. If I could discover an offender I would certainly use my powers.

Mr. McMULLEN. I do not intend to occupy the attention of the House any longer. I shall, however, always address the House on any subject that I consider in the interests of my constituency, and any action on the part of hon. gentleman opposite will never deter me from expressing my opinion. This question should be thoroughly ventilated, for the country cannot afford to have it repeated at another general election. This dodge is about the last that can be resorted to, I imagine. Our political experience of recent years, has been that something is always unearthed to give hon. gentleman opposite a means for accomplishing their object. This last move is not a creditable one, and no