

changed to prefix Right Hon., and the name William Lyon contracted to W.L. These changes from the nomination papers as on the day nominated have been persisted in in spite of the warning given by myself to the returning officer. The ballots have been very loosely handled in the printing office and were readily accessible to the public who might enter that office at any time. In the interests of the proper administration of this election and of British fair play I would ask that you take steps, Sir, for a check-up, not alone on the ballot situation but for the safeguard of the electorate and the candidates in this contest. If necessary to lay charge based upon information I have given you, advise me section and procedure.

T. D. AGNEW,

Official agent for D. L. BURGESS, M.C.

The provisions of the Elections Act, Sir, and of the instructions issued by the Chief Electoral Officer are very clear upon this point. Paragraph 43 of the instructions read, in part, as follows:

Finally the printing of the ballots should be put in hand not later than the afternoon of nomination day. The names of the candidates will be arranged alphabetically according to the initial letter of their surnames, unless they otherwise specially agree before three o'clock on nomination day, and the names, addresses and occupations will appear on the ballots in exactly the same form as on the nomination papers.

Those are merely the instructions of the Chief Electoral Officer. But section 50 of the Dominion Elections Act is equally specific:

The ballots of each voter shall be a printed paper, in this act called a ballot paper, on which the names of the candidates, alphabetically arranged in the order of their surnames, shall be printed exactly—

The word "exactly" appears in the statute. —as they are set out in the nomination papers.

It is clear from the telegram that I have read—which was sent to the Chief Electoral Officer—and from the instructions that there has been a departure from the provisions of the statute, knowingly and wilfully made by the returning officer, whose attention was directed to it.

An hon. MEMBER: Question.

Mr. BENNETT: I am coming to the question. I will move the adjournment of this House, if that is what is wanted. Mr. Speaker, no matter can be more vital to the dignity and welfare of this House than that the ballot papers should not be manipulated. There should be no possibility of ballots falling into unauthorized hands through loose methods of printing being followed. That is a trifling, commonplace observation to make.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask the hon. gentleman to confine himself to the question,—

Mr. BENNETT: I am.

Mr. SPEAKER: —because before the orders of the day are called no speeches are allowed.

Mr. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, no one would more unwillingly transgress the rules of this House than I, but I have a right from the language of the rules to direct attention to a matter of great public importance. In consequence of an interruption I perhaps indicated a method I might pursue which would precipitate a debate that I desire to avoid. But I do direct the attention of the minister to this matter as one of the most serious that can possibly be thought of by public men, namely, the manner in which the franchise of the people is taken and the vote recorded.

I ask now: What steps have been taken to ensure that the will of the people, as indicated by their marked ballots, shall find expression in the ballots counted that come out of the ballot boxes? May I point out that the federal power is not wholly without its arm of authority with which to protect the ballot boxes. It has the mounted police, and all that is implied by that force to see that law and order are upheld, and that the will of the people is not thwarted by the manipulation of the ballots that were not at least marked.

Mr. PARENT: When is the question coming?

Mr. BENNETT: Did the hon. gentleman ask a question? He will get an answer if he does.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Leader of the House): Mr. Speaker, I must say first that my learned and hon. friend kindly communicated to me a copy of this telegram that has been sent by the agent of one of the candidates at the present by-election in the county of Prince Albert. Let me say at once that under the law the elections are not carried on by the government or under the government. They are carried on under an officer of this parliament called the Chief Electoral Officer, who is appointed by this parliament, is responsible to this parliament, and reports only to you, Mr. Speaker, and not to any member of the government. I have no doubt that the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada is looking after all that is necessary for the proper carrying on of the election in Prince Albert.

If my hon. friend desires to learn what the Chief Electoral Officer has done or the answer he has made to this telegram, there is a section of the electoral law which gives my hon. friend or myself or anybody else the right to go and inspect all the returns, communications and correspondence, to-day, to-