

but I ask, in all fairness of my hon. friend from Marquette, should this be against the law of Manitoba? Will it be said that such a law should be maintained and are we in this House powerless to remedy such an outrage against duly qualified electors? Shall it be said that although the law of Manitoba will not allow justice to be done under such circumstances we have to sit still and allow these men to be disfranchised? That is the position in which we are placed and that is one reason why we came to the conclusion that we had to take some action this year.

The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. W. J. Roche) stated the other day, and his statement was repeated by the hon. member for Souris (Mr. Schaffner), that in 1904 an Act had been drafted to deal with the province of Manitoba, that the Act had been printed, not only drafted, but printed. I wondered at the time if my ears did not deceive me when such a statement was made. If such a Bill had been prepared I would have known something of it, and I have to say here that no Act was drafted in 1904 but the Act which was brought down by the Minister of Justice and which became law. No such Act as has been suggested by the hon. member for Souris and the hon. member for Marquette even was contemplated, although the suggestion may have been made.

Mr. W. J. ROCHE. Does the Prime Minister say that no Act was contemplated, no Bill was drafted?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No Act was contemplated by the government and no Bill was prepared, that I say most decisively.

Mr. STAPLES. Was such a Bill prepared in 1903?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. So far as my memory goes, I say with all candour to my hon. friend that no Act was prepared in 1903 or 1904 except the Act which was brought down in 1904. I may say, and why should I not say, that my friends from Manitoba represented to me at that time, as they did since, that the Act of Manitoba was very unfair towards them, especially in the manner in which it was administered. This year we have thought, however, that we should listen to the representations made to us upon this subject. I consulted the Minister of Justice, I consulted my colleagues, and we determined to bring down the Bill that we have to-day, not, Sir, that we are absolutely wedded to that Bill, not that we are not prepared to receive amendments from our friends, not that we are not ready to try to improve it and amend it so as to give satisfaction, in the very words of my hon. friend from Marquette (Mr. W. J. Roche), to Grit and Tory alike. But, Sir, I ask my hon. friends if they will not ad-

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mit that although the legislation which to-day exists in Manitoba and the manner in which it is administered may be satisfactory to the Tories, it is not satisfactory to the Grits—and that is the reason we have introduced this legislation.

Now, Sir, my hon. friends will tell me that they do not want this legislation. They are absolutely opposed to it because the legislation which we bring forward would place the preparation of the lists, in so far as the province of Manitoba is concerned, in the hands of officers appointed by this government. That is their objection. Let us be frank with one another upon this question. Let us meet on principles which we can all appeal to and which we can all accept. My hon. friend from Marquette and other hon. members on the other side of the House do not want this law to be passed, because, if it were to be passed, it would give the preparation of the lists, not to their own friends, but to our own friends. Now, Sir, will it surprise them very much, if they have no confidence in us, that we should not be burdened by much confidence in them? If they think it is unfair that the lists upon which they want to go to the election should be prepared by their opponents do they think it is fair that the lists upon which we would have to go to the election should be prepared by our opponents? Can we not agree therefore to devise a law which will remove the control of the elections both from the Grits and the Tories so as to give satisfaction to both Grits and Tories? That is the proposition which I have to make to my hon. friend from Marquette and to all the other hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side of the House. The other day the hon. member for Marquette stated that the lists as prepared were perfectly honest and as evidence of his earnestness in the matter he quoted this article from the 'Telegram' of Winnipeg in which \$25 is offered to every man who presents proof that, being a qualified elector, his name has not been put upon the list:

The 'Telegram' will pay the sum of \$25 to any elector in the province of Manitoba who is not already on the voters' lists who is refused registration if he applies in the regular manner and is legally qualified to vote under our law. Should any claim or claims be made under this offer each case to be referred to Hon. C. J. Mickle, leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition in the Manitoba legislature, from whose decision there shall be no appeal. Should any award be made, one half the amount is to be paid to the elector who has been refused registration and the other half to the Winnipeg General Hospital.

If my hon. friend is so confident of the honesty and accuracy of the lists prepared by this revision perhaps he will agree with me that it would be more in accordance