

This afternoon I heard the very acute legal argument of the honourable gentleman who has such an intimate knowledge of Nova Scotia and of Sam Slick and other literary products of Nova Scotia, but who has not such an intimate acquaintance with the facts. I am not a lawyer, as every one can judge from my conversation, but I am in possession of some facts that the honourable gentleman does not know. I say that when a new form of enumeration is set up the burden of proof that the former system was improperly exercised or inadequate. Did the legal gentleman do that? He took the essential point for granted. He did not prove that the present enumeration was a failure, or that it was partial or illegal in any respect. In the first place, the names put on the lists come from the assessors' books. The assessors are fully acquainted with the property of the individual. They are chosen from various parts of the city, and they give their very best attention to the compilation of the lists, which are posted up. The revisers and enumerators have access to the assessors' books; which are in the court house building where they have their office, and they have full intercourse with the assessors and other officials. The revisers then make out lists from their knowledge, and from the applications which they receive. These men are all sworn. They are all of good character; they all have experience. Why not put that experience, knowledge, character and sworn obligation by the side of an enumerator who must be chosen? Unless we assume that the enumerator has a better character, more knowledge or more experience than these other men, we should not lay aside the present system. We should not lay aside the present system if it be equal or superior to the one that is proposed. Both sides come before the reviser or arbiter to make out their case. They have attorneys. They state reasons why certain names should be left off the lists or why they should be put on, and the city clerk, a sworn official of the city, sits in judgment. Then the persons whose names are posted up are allowed to vote. I have had experience of enumerators in my time. Some twenty odd years ago Mr. E. H. Harrington, a very respectable and honourable barrister of Halifax, was appointed revising barrister. Next Mr. B. H. Eaton was appointed. He was a man of great integrity, but he was not a native of the city of Halifax. He did not know the people, and great confusion arose from the fact that the

names of individuals who lived in one extremity of the city were put on the lists for districts far remote from their residences, and where they were not known. Without any intention of doing so, he frequently left off names which should have been on the list, those of citizens of respectability who had been qualified for a long time.

It has been demonstrated by experience in the city of Halifax that the system at present in vogue is infinitely superior to any enumerator, even when he enters upon his duties with the best intention. First of all, he has not the time; secondly, he has not the knowledge; thirdly, he has not the benefit of collateral sources of information to enable him to make out a list as accurately as it can be done under the present system. Sometimes the conduct of these officials does not satisfy gentlemen on the opposite side of politics; but if they are successful in the elections they say that everything has worked admirably and smoothly, that the officials have discharged their functions with repute, and that there could be no better system than the one at present in vogue.

Now, honourable gentlemen, from theory, from history, from experience and from knowledge of the circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that the lists as at present prepared are as near accuracy as it is possible for them to be, because the information has been derived from the best sources, the men employed are men of integrity, they are anxious to discharge their duties properly, they have the information at hand to enable them to do so; and, as an honourable gentleman has said, if, with all those qualifications, they do not make out a better list than the enumerator can they are criminals, I should be very loth to place the stigma of being criminals upon the heads of those city officials who have given the best of their services and have the confidence of the community.

Hon. Mr. DAVID: I should like to ask the honourable the leader of the Government a question. I have tried twice to do so, but did not succeed. I am of the opinion of the honourable member for Ottawa (Hon. Mr. Belcourt). I cannot believe that there is no way to an agreement. The honourable leader of the House has said that the question of agreement was closed; but does he not think that the suggestions made by the honourable member for Hamilton (Hon. Mr. Lynch-Staunton) opens the door to another conference, and does he not think that the differences