

an invitation to take it or reject it as you see fit." The law was passed by Parliament to apply to every province. More than that we amended the law of this country to provide that women should sit in the Dominion Parliament. A woman from the province of Quebec can sit in the Parliament of Canada as a representative of a Quebec constituency even at the present moment—she has that right under our Dominion law. Surely it will be grossly anomalous and worse than that, to say that a woman may sit in this Parliament as a representative from Quebec and yet the women of that province shall not have the right to vote. That anomaly would be overcome by the proposition contained in this Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to dwell at too great length upon the provisions of this Bill. I am afraid I have already occupied too much time of the House. There are, however, one or two points I would like to allude to before resuming my seat, and one of them is in regard to a criticism which I heard a few days ago by a member of the House, who said he had read the Bill from beginning to end and his first suggestion was that it was too fair to be honest—"that there must be something lurking within the provisions of the Bill, or something at present unseen; it is absolutely too fair." The next criticism he offered is the one I intend to deal with for a moment. He said: "The only tinge or taint of partisanship I find in the whole Bill is in regard to the appointment of returning officers." Well, in regard to the appointment of returning officers, we have adopted the course which has been in vogue here ever since Confederation, and is in vogue to-day in the majority of the provinces, though not in all of them. That is that in His Majesty's writ, in the writ of His Excellency the Governor General, the Governor in Council shall name the man who is to be returning officer. That system is still continued. There has been a great deal of discussion upon that point by the Government. I can assure the House that this Bill has received very serious consideration in respect to all of its clauses and all of its proposals. The clause dealing with returning officers was one of those most seriously considered, and we concluded there was no better system which we knew of or could devise, no safer system in the interest of the public, than that provided for here. The Government of the day must be responsible for the elections, and if an unfair election takes place the responsibility must be upon their shoulders.

[Mr. Guthrie.]

They must be answerable to the people, you cannot place the responsibility on His Excellency the Governor General; he only speaks through his Cabinet, or through the Prime Minister, the mouth-piece of his Cabinet. The Prime Minister must recommend to His Excellency the name to be put in the writ as returning officer. Now that returning officer is the appointee of the Government, and has the power, under this Bill, to appoint deputy returning officers and registrars, both rural and urban; and my friend in discussing that question said to me, "That leaves open the door to all kinds of partisanship and corruption." Now, I deny that suggestion, and I believe that anybody who examines the clauses of this Bill as they apply to deputy returning officers and to registrars will see that the measure has been drawn in such a way as absolutely to preclude dishonesty, no matter how evilly disposed the returning officer may be. He has the power to appoint deputy returning officers; he has the power to appoint the registrar in the city, town or village and also the registrar in the rural district. Yet no man can be deprived of his vote by the partisan act of the registrar—it is impossible. If the voter goes to the registrar and the registrar refuses him, he asks for a certificate of refusal. Suppose the registrar is really a corrupt and dishonest man and says: "No, I will not give you a certificate." In that event the applicant can appeal to the judge without certificate. Suppose the man does not go to register at all, and it is well known that where there is a limited time to do a certain thing there are a great many people inclined to leave it to the last minute of the last day. Suppose there are a good many there at the last moment of the last day, and some of them are left off the list through lack of time; that does not deprive them of their votes. They may still go to the judge without reference to the registrar at all, without taking a certificate of refusal, without giving notice of appeal, and obtain relief, for the judge has such absolutely unfettered discretion in the matter that no man can be deprived of his right to vote.

Mr. DEMERS: Is there in every case a right of appeal from the decision of the registrar?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes.

Mr. DEMERS: Even in the rural polling division?

Mr. GUTHRIE: No, there is no appeal at all in the rural polling division; there