

"HARRISTON, 7th March, 1887.

"I hereby certify that the member-elect for the electoral district of the north riding of the county of Wellington, in pursuance of the writ, as having the majority of votes lawfully given, is James McMullen, of the town of Mount Forest, in the county of Wellington."

My return is marked as having been received at the city of Ottawa on the 15th March, though this certificate is dated the 7th March. I feel quite certain that the returning officer, after the required number of days had expired during which he was required by law to hold the papers for the purpose of a recount, forwarded them to Ottawa. It only takes a day for a letter to reach Ottawa from Harriston, so I think those papers must have been received here before the 15th. The returning officer told me he should return the papers the moment the time fixed by law expired. I believe he did so. The Clerk of the Crown in Chancery says that the papers were received here on the 15th March. I was not gazetted until the 2nd April. The Clerk of the Crown kept them over not only for one Saturday, but for two, and it was not until the third that my constituency was gazetted as having returned me as its representative. From the discussion that has taken place in connection with this matter, and from the evidence which has been already presented to this House and will go to the country, those people who are unbiassed in their political views can come to no other conclusion than that an arrangement has been privately and secretly entered into, to keep back the gazetting of Reform members, so as to give the Conservatives all the opportunity possible of entering protests after they themselves had escaped being protested. The first Minister, in his reply to the hon. gentleman who brought this question before the House, in the first place, said that the probabilities were that, if the returns remained over for some time, until the heat of political passion had worn off, they might not be protested, but if they were gazetted immediately, and while the people retained the feelings of bitterness which had arisen during the contest, possibly a protest might be entered. From that view of the case, he would lead us to suppose that the members of the Government were all anxious to have protests entered against themselves. If that be the position, we must conclude that they all courted protests, because almost all of them were gazetted first, while most of the Reformers were left to the last. I have no such idea. I am satisfied that they had a very different intention from that. I am satisfied that they were a little scared at the close of the contest on the 22nd, and that they feared that things would be a little tighter than they had expected, and so they kept back the gazetting of members on the Opposition side of the House, and possibly it might have resulted in a number of gentlemen not being gazetted at all if the Government had not found that they were going to have a small majority after all. I am satisfied, from the evidence which has been brought before the House, from the exposures which have been made, that no reasonable-minded man would come to any other conclusion than that the Government were disposed, if it were necessary in their own interest, to put off the gazetting of a number of Reformers until after the House had met, until after the Speaker was elected, and possibly until after the House had risen for the first time; so that in some way or other they might defeat the intention of the electors and might prevent members coming here to represent the constituencies for which they had been elected. It is not at all creditable to the hon. gentlemen that these means should have been resorted to. It shows a spirit of unfairness which is very much to be deplored in a Canadian Parliament. While we differ in our views on a great number of questions, while we go to the polls and fight before our constituents, and while we seek the suffrages of the people on the ground of the different views held by us on political matters, it is necessary that when the verdict is given it should be carried out; and, when the people decide that a certain individual, holding

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certain political views, should be their representative in this House, it is right that their views should not be interfered with, or the man whom they have chosen prevented from taking his seat, or placed at a disadvantage when he does so. We know, from the number of protests that have been entered, that if in any case a Conservative has been protested, then a Reformer has been also protested, in many cases out of a feeling of bitterness. Taking the counties which lie in the neighborhood of my constituency, what do we find? We find that the return from North Grey was received here on the 15th, the same day as my return was received, the same day that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery admits that he received the return for North Wellington. The member for North Grey was gazetted on the 19th March, while, for some reason best known to himself, the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery did not gazette me until the 2nd April. Then take East Grey, the county by which mine is bounded on the east. The return from that constituency was received on the 14th, and the member was gazetted on the 19th. There was nothing wrong with those papers. There was evidently no necessity to make any enquiry into the papers from East Grey, because that hon. member was gazetted on the 19th, but my papers were received only the day after, and I was not gazetted until the 2nd April. Then again take the case of Centre Wellington. That was formerly represented by Dr. Orton. It is now represented by another gentleman. The papers in connection with Centre Wellington the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery says he received on the 4th, but he did not gazette the member until the 26th; he could not find room for him in the *Gazette* of the 19th. Then take the case of Cardwell, the constituency of the hon. the Minister of the Interior, which is also on the east of me, touching my constituency. His returns were received here on the 9th and he was gazetted on the 12th. Then take the case of Peel, a constituency which is also quite close to me. The returns from Peel were received on the 9th and the member was gazetted on the 12th. We notice that all the Conservative constituencies in my immediate section were, in every single instance, gazetted immediately after the returns were received. There was not a single instance in which a Conservative return was left over, while in many cases the Reform returns were held over for one, for two and even for three weeks. What does this all mean? It means this. Take the case of South Grey: it was received early in March and not gazetted until the 26th. Nearly three weeks elapsed from the time the papers connected with South Grey were received before the return was gazetted. Now, the meaning is this: If there had been a protest in North Grey, there would certainly have been one in South Grey, because there was plenty of time from the 15th to the 26th to work up the necessary evidence and file a protest against the hon. member for South Grey (Mr. Landerkin), if North Grey had been protested. Then take the case of Cornwall. If there had been a protest there it would have had to be filed before the 12th April. There was plenty of time up to the 2nd April to file a protest in North Wellington, and so on in all the constituencies around. It shows that the Government intended to have all the advantage in filing protests, and from the number that has been filed and the way which hon. gentlemen on this side have been treated, it is quite clear that was the intention. Take the case of the member for Prince Edward (Mr. Platt), which I think is the most glaring of all. We have evidence that the return was made at the proper time. He took the pains to enquire from the postmaster at home as to the date upon which these papers were mailed to Ottawa, and he also enquired at the Post Office Department here as to the date when they were received, and he ascertained that the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery received the return four days