

Mr. WHITE (Hastings). Name the county.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). You are very anxious to get information.

Mr. WHITE (Hastings). I want to get the truth.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). You always want to get information on everything.

Mr. SPEAKER. Order, order.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I hold in my hands two declarations made by two individuals who desired to be placed on the voters' list, in a constituency in western Ontario. They were sworn to before a commissioner in proper form, yet these two applications were rejected, and why? The reason given by the revising officer is, that there was writing on the margin of the papers. Now, Sir, you will see—anybody can see at a glance, that the space left for filling in the qualification of the voter, was not large enough to enable the applicants to fill it in, and they had to extend three lines on the margin of the declaration. Why, Sir, this thing is done every day in the courts of justice; if you have not space enough to fill in a form, it is carried out on the margin; but this wise revising officer rejected two of the declarations because a portion of three of the lines written in them were written on the margin. I say that is as scandalous a thing as can well be imagined, and one cannot understand that a revising officer could be acting honestly and fairly, in rejecting an application upon such flimsy grounds as that. I hold in my hands another application made by another applicant for a place on the voters' list, and his qualification is stated as follows:—

"That I am a resident within the said electoral district, and derive an income from my earnings, in money or money's worth, of not less than \$300 annually, and have so derived such income and been such a resident for one year next before the 1st day of January, 1886, and now reside in the said township."

I say, Sir, that that is a compliance with the law, and I think I can challenge even the Minister of Justice upon that point. Sub-section 6, section 4, provides:

"Is a resident within such electoral district, and derives an income from his earnings, in money or money's worth, or from some trade, office, calling, or profession, or from some investment in Canada, of not less than \$300 annually, and has so derived such income and been such resident for one year next before the said 1st day of January, &c."

I say that this declaration is a declaration within the spirit and letter of the law, and yet this revising officer rejected that declaration, and sent it back to the man who made it, and he had not an opportunity of correcting the mistake, if there was any. I think I can also, in this case, challenge the Minister of Justice to make any correction upon this declaration; and yet the revising officer, for reasons best known to himself, rejected it. It may be said: What wrong is done to the man, since he has the right to appeal to the court of final revision to have his name placed on the roll? Sir, if this man is to be at the mercy of the revising officer, who rejected his application in the first instance for no legal reason known to anybody, and that does not appear upon a careful reading of the Statute—if he is rejected upon such grounds as I have mentioned, what reason has the applicant to suppose that greater justice will be meted out to him in the final court of revision? I say that under these circumstances a man has little chance of getting on the voters' list. I will give you another case. Here is an applicant who wishes to be placed on the list in a constituency in western Ontario, and his declaration under oath is as follows:—

"I derive an income from my earnings in money, of not less than \$300 annually, and have so derived such income and been such resident for 12 months prior to January 1st, 1886."

Well, Sir, upon reading the Statute one would naturally suppose that that was a sufficient declaration to justify a man being placed on the list, but in this case the application was rejected, and why? The revising officer says,

first, he should show that he derives an income from his earnings. Well, I say that the man does swear to that. Another reason assigned by the revising officer is:

"That he should state 'that he has so derived each income and has been such resident for one year next before the first day of January, A.D. 1886.'"

The man uses, instead of the words "next before," the word "prior," but surely the revising officer, in the preliminary preparation of the list, is not justified in rejecting an application for such a reason as that. Anybody can understand what is meant unless he is wilfully blind, or unless he does not wish to do what is just and right. But that man's application was rejected, and he is driven, if he wants to be placed on the list, to all the trouble, expense, worry and annoyance of making another application to the court of final revision. I hold in my hands two applications made by two respectable men, one a Presbyterian clergyman, in a western constituency. Both applied on the ground of income, and both applications were rejected, and upon what grounds do you suppose? Can you imagine the reason? The note on the back of them, is, "written very bad;" and because the revising officer says the writing is very bad, both these applications are rejected. Well, Sir, I throw out a challenge to hon. gentlemen on the Treasury Benches, and I venture to say there is not a man among them, even including my smiling friend, the Minister of Agriculture, who can write as good a hand as the worst of these declarations. Yet both are rejected because the revising officer is old, and I believe, short sighted, and he says the writing is not very good. What is the revising clerk for? Why, if the revising officer could not read it he should have obtained the assistance of his clerk before rejecting it, and the declaration could have been easily deciphered. I hold in my hand another application in which the person applies to be placed on the list as an income voter. He swears:

"That he is in receipt of an income from his occupation and calling as carpenter of \$300 and over, annually, and was so in receipt of said income as aforesaid and resided as aforesaid for one year next prior to, etc."

Observe, this applicant says "next prior" to the 1st of January, 1886, and this revising officer to whom the application is made, rejects it because he did not use the words, "next before," instead of "next prior to." Well, I had supposed that in these modern times common sense would prevail in such matters as these. I recollect, and the Minister of Justice recollects the time when, if a man did not cross his "t's" and dot his "i's," he was subject to a demurrer and the proceedings might be set aside. I thought that we had got beyond that stage, but these wise revising officers are introducing the old system and if an "i" is not dotted or a "t" crossed, the man who is applying for those rights which every freeman loves, is deprived of them, because the revising officer stupidly says the man has used the words "next prior to" instead of "next before." Here is another case in which the qualifications are stated in the following words:—

"I have been for twelve months prior to the 1st of January, 1886, and am now, a resident of St. Thomas, and my wages are \$300 or more yearly, and were such for one year prior to the 1st of January, 1886."

The revising officer said that the applicant should show that he derives an income from his earnings. Well, I take it that he did show that, but the revising officer ignores the solemn statement made by this applicant. The revising officer further says the applicant should show that he so derives such income, and has been a resident for one year next before the 1st of January. The same objection the revising officer took to one or two of the cases I have referred to is made applicable to this case, and the evidence rejected on that ground. In another case, the applicant swears: