

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

Monday, April 29, 1918.

The House met at Three o'clock.

REPORTS AND PAPERS.

A return containing copies of letters and telegrams between the Dominion Government and the Provincial Executives concerning the Order in Council of December 22, 1917, respecting the sale of securities by provincial, colonial, or foreign governments, municipalities, or other bodies.—Hon. Mr. Burrell.

A return showing payment to certain newspapers since October 1, 1917.—Hon. Mr. Burrell.

A return giving the names of the officers employed on the staff in Military District No. 5, the salaries paid to them, services performed, etc.—Hon. Mr. Burrell.

DOMINION ELECTIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Mr F. H. KEEFER (Port Arthur and Kenora) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 68, to amend the Dominion Elections Act.

He said: The object of the Bill is to enable labouring men on railways at the divisional points to have their votes registered on election day. In my own riding, where there are so many terminal railway points, a very large number of railway men are disfranchised because they have either to neglect their duty and lay off to vote, or proceed on duty without going to the polling place. The principle of the Bill is one, I am sure, that will commend itself to, and enlist the support of all the members of the House. I hope the Government will, if not during the present session, at any rate during next session, propose a measure and press it through Parliament, which will enable the most representative class of Canadians to have a voice in the election of members to this Parliament thoroughly workable. The Bill as I have framed it is more especially adapted to conditions in my own riding, and I am

afraid it would not work in this part of the country, where a railway man starts out and before his run finishes gets into another riding. This Bill simply provides for conditions in my own riding where a man can cast his vote so that he will not be disfranchised.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Hon. C. J. DOHERTY (Minister of Justice) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 69, to amend the Criminal Code. He said:

The Bill proposes to amend certain sections of the Criminal Code. The first of these amending sections deals with offences against morals. It is proposed to amend section 211 of the Criminal Code as it now stands by making it a criminal offence to seduce or have illicit connection with any girl of previously chaste character, of or above the age of sixteen years and under the age of eighteen years. As the law at present stands this offence consists in having illicit intercourse with a girl over the age of fourteen years and under the age of sixteen. By the change the age of the girl against whom such an offence may be committed is raised.

The section further provides that proof that a girl has had on a previous occasion illicit connections with the accused shall not be deemed to be proof that she was not of previously chaste character; and by a subsection of the section it is provided that no male person under the age of 21 shall be prosecuted for an offence under its provisions. In view of the raising of the age of the young woman, it was considered that there should be some protection for the young man.

The second provision of the Bill proposes to amend that section which now makes it an offence for certain classes of employers, or persons in authority, to have connection with young women, so as to extend it to all persons occupying the relation of employer,