

*Peace River Election*

Mr. MEIGHEN: May I ask when parliament surrendered the right to correct that wrong sooner?

Mr. BOIVIN: To correct the wrong sooner than it is legally ascertained?

Mr. MEIGHEN: To correct the wrong earlier than the report of the court.

Mr. BOIVIN: Does my right hon. friend attempt to argue; does he want this House to decide, or does he want you, Mr. Speaker, to decide by your ruling that it is possible to have two trials of the same case going on at the same time, one in the courts legally constituted by this parliament, and the other in a committee constituted by this parliament?

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. gentleman permit me? If this is to be tried by a committee, it is tried during this session. Will he explain to me how the other trial can take place during this session?

Mr. BOIVIN: I shall not attempt to explain to my right hon. friend what he already knows.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He cannot.

Mr. BOIVIN: My right hon. friend knows very well that the other trial will not proceed during the session. He also knows very well that if this matter was referred to the committee on Privileges and Elections, the hearing would be dragged out there for political purposes. Witnesses would be brought here from northern Alberta and the whole trial would be repeated before the committee of parliament, and the inquiry would not be over until the dying days of the session.

Mr. MEIGHEN: When did the government decide on that conduct before the committee?

Mr. BOIVIN: Will the right hon. gentleman repeat his question?

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman says that the trial will be dragged out. There is no reason certainly why we should drag it out. When did the government decide to adopt these tactics before the committee?

Mr. BOIVIN: If there is no reason for my right hon. friend and his supporters to drag it out, there is no political reason for the government supporters to do so. We do not ask to have it brought here. Why did they?

Mr. MEIGHEN: To correct a wrong.

Mr. BOIVIN: To correct a wrong which my right hon. friend himself admits cannot be corrected until it is too late, until the end of the session.

[Mr. Boivin.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: It can if the government will do their duty.

Mr. BOIVIN: And further, it would be to correct a wrong which is yet imaginary. It has not yet been proven—a wrong must be proven in the court before the hon. member for Peace River can be asked to resign.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Where do you find that?

Mr. BOIVIN: The law is clear that a wrong must be established before he can be asked to resign. Even if he so desired, he could not resign now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Give us a chance to prove it.

Mr. BOIVIN: The leader of the opposition wants parliament, with all its power and might, to take a member and expel him from the House, to decide that he has no right to occupy a seat here, when as a matter of fact the hon. member could not resign if he so desired. That is the position in which the right hon. gentleman attempts to place parliament.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is nonsense.

Mr. BOIVIN: In 1913 the right hon. leader of the opposition, speaking in this House, said that this House has divested itself of all authority to inquire into matters connected with elections save only those questions relating to the qualifications of the members elected. Every other matter concerning elections, the House had divested itself of its right and authority to inquire into.

Mr. MEIGHEN: That is right, but will the hon. gentleman permit me?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order, order.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Hon. gentlemen are very, very timid about their cause. They think it can best be defended by noise. This matter is not an attempt to inquire into an election. It is to inquire into an election return.

Mr. BOIVIN: If my right hon. friend desires to propound the argument that he wants to unseat a member without inquiring into his election, he is welcome to such an argument. He admits it is an attempt to unseat a member, and yet he says it is not an inquiry into an election. How he can combine the two with that spirit of justice that is to be found in the heart of every man, is something which surpasses my humble understanding.

I do not want to argue further, Mr. Speaker. The point of order, which, after all, is really the only matter before Your Honour at the present time, was clearly raised and explained