

it out with that clearness and readiness which are essential in a matter like the franchise.

The hon. member for West Huron (Mr. Cameron) said that one of the greatest objections to the existing law was its fraudulent character, and that it was desirable to adopt measures that would prevent anything like fraud or dishonesty in the conduct of our elections. There is not a member of this House who does not realize the vital importance of having an honest election law, and one that will be fairly and honestly administered. I was very much astonished on a former occasion, when this question was under the consideration of the House, to hear the hon. First Minister refer to ballot stuffing. There is something worse in my judgment than even ballot stuffing, and that is stuffing the voters' lists, but I may tell the hon. gentleman that I think he can hardly have been following what has taken place in connection with the charges of ballot stuffing in the province of Manitoba when he ventured to speak of ballot stuffing with regard to that province. The hon. gentleman, I presume, does not require to be told that having expended some \$5,000 of public money in the prosecution of that charge, having put the law in motion in that province, and the Attorney General having arrested some twenty or more parties accused of that charge, the result was that only one single conviction was obtained out of the whole twenty cases. Instead of its being proved that any such general violation of the law had taken place, the very reverse was proven. One man was convicted on his own testimony, and it is believed that that testimony was due to the fact that the Conservative party had refused to allow him to blackmail them. He then went to the other side, and on the evidence of this one man, a blackmailer, they succeeded in obtaining one conviction out of twenty or more cases, in which people had been treated with the greatest harshness and cruelty possible, through the law being put in force against them without cause. One after another of those accused was acquitted and only one conviction obtained, and that, under most questionable circumstances, and after an expenditure of \$5,000 by hon. gentlemen opposite.

I may say that I hold in my hand the report of a speech of the leader of the Opposition in the Manitoba House, Mr. Roblin :

Mr. Roblin said before proceeding to the orders of the day there was a matter of importance to the province and to himself, as a loyal citizen, which he would like to bring before the House. He referred to the rights of citizenship. The speaker then read from a speech made in the House of Commons on Friday last by the Hon. Mr. Laurier, regarding the elections held in this province last summer. This statement should be taken in connection with what was put into the mouth of His Excellency the Governor General in the Speech from the Throne. This, the speak-

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er thought, fully justified him in bringing this question to the attention of the House. With the knowledge which he possessed regarding the infamy that has followed in the tracks of our provincial Election Act, he could only qualify this Act as an infamy.

There we have a description of this Manitoba Act which the hon. Solicitor General (Mr. Fitzpatrick) invites us to make the law of this Dominion for the election of members of this House :

By it, not only are the people of this province deprived of their rights, but the very law shields the men who are guilty. Mr. Laurier's intention is to substitute the present Dominion Elections Act with the Act which is a standing disgrace to this province.

And I invite the attention of hon. gentlemen who want an honest law, one that will prevent fraud, to this statement :

By it, at the last provincial election, above 100,000 men have been robbed of their franchise, and now Mr. Laurier, seeing how much it has helped his friends in this province, now proposes to give it wider scope and adopt it for the Dominion.

And when it is remembered how small is the number of votes in the province of Manitoba, the House can readily grasp the statement made by a responsible member of the local legislature that it has defrauded 100,000 electors in that province of their votes. What has been the result of all these prosecutions for alleged ballot stuffing :

What has been the result of all these prosecutions for alleged ballot stuffing? Only one man is convicted, and that upon his own evidence. If the Attorney General has obtained from his protégé, Frechorn, all the evidence that has been revealed before the courts, he should communicate it to the House, so that we might be in a position to refute the vile slander of Laurier's on this province. Is Laurier aware that, after his Government had granted \$5,000 to this government to prosecute those suspected of ballot stuffing, only one man has been convicted?

Mr. Roblin gives us in graphic detail what the real character of this Manitoba Act is, and I would not trouble the House with it were it not that we are invited to make this Manitoba Act the law of this Parliament for the election of members to this House. Mr. Roblin states from his place in the House :

What does Laurier propose doing? He intends, if he can, to have the provincial and infamous law imposed on the whole Dominion. This Act was introduced in 1890 or 1892. He had fought this Bill at every stage because he knew that the government intended by it to legislate away the rights of a large number of voters. As it was first introduced, it would give power to an agent to prepare the voters' list without any one knowing who was on it. He had, however, succeeded in having this clause struck out. As it now reads, the Lieutenant-Governor can appoint a registration clerk, who is not bound by time, so that a court of revision can, and often is, appointed and sitting before the list is completed. It can be easily seen what an opportunity this