

men on that side of the House. Now how do you explain the absolute inaction under this tremendous pile of grievances and wrong—inaction absolute and positive of the Liberal party in local affairs in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba? Has my right hon. friend any explanation to give? Is there any explanation of it? If there is an explanation, is it not this, that the men who are closest to it know that there is nothing in it, and the men that are furthest away, it is thought can be bamboozled by reckless statements? At Winnipeg where the people live, in Manitoba where they know this sort of talk the assertion would not go down. That is the reason it is not employed there. The distance is the reason it is employed here. More than that, will my right hon. friend deny that the Hon. Mr. Mickle has stated in the local legislature that the present Manitoba law is fairly good legislation and the best they have had in that province in his political experience? There is your local leader—will my right hon. friend give any credence at all to this local leader in the Manitoba legislature? Or will he rather take the Rudneski affidavits, brought by the hon. member for Winnipeg, as a proof, against the word of the leader of his party in the local legislature?

We have waited a long while for legislation with reference to an election law. It has been long promised and is much needed. It has been looked for widely. At last it comes down, and when it comes down, what is it? Take the speech of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Aylesworth). For all that fell from him, this Bill consists absolutely of one clause and one only. That is the clause for taking over the franchises of Manitoba and British Columbia and the unorganized territories. In his speech the Minister of Justice gave more than three quarters of his time to section number 1 of this Bill and very cursory attention, if any, to the other sections.

What is this Bill when we come to look at it? It is remarkable for what it does not include. My hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) briefly enumerated what it does not include that it might have included. No provision is made for simultaneous polling, that is, that all the constituencies of the Dominion, with the possible exception of the Yukon, shall have polling on the same day. The present method is an abuse. There is no reason why the polling should not be simultaneous. But the Minister of Justice was too busy with section 1 of this Bill to think about the simultaneous polling. And what about the other flagrant abuse practically carried on by my right hon. friend (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) of allowing a constituency to remain unrepresented indefinitely in this House because of partisan and political difficulties which remain to be cured? Is it not an outrage upon the rights of the

people, upon all principles of good government, that an electoral unit should remain unrepresented in this House for a longer time than is actually and reasonably necessary to bring about an election? There is nothing in this Bill to make it necessary that by-elections shall be held within a reasonable time, or to provide that, if there be more than one vacancy, the elections shall take place simultaneously. There is nothing of improved machinery, either as regards methods or appointees, with the exception of one or two technical improvements, as, for instance, in the service of writs in election protests and so on. There is nothing to prevent that abuse, which has been growing under this government, of using government officials as active political partisans. The Minister of the Interior (Mr. Oliver) made, I think, a very great slip the other night, a slip which shows that he at least, whatever may be true of the government as a whole, has not the least idea of the principle involved or of the gravity of this matter. What is the fact of the case? The fact is that the government use their officials, dressed in its authority—and every Dominion official has a certain authority by virtue of being a Dominion official—to help their party in their election contests, making of the officials, in many cases, almost permanent electioneering clerks. The Minister of the Interior tried to excuse one case by saying that, though he had one Dominion official with him in an election contest, the official was not a permanent employee, or was paid a very small salary. The salary has nothing at all to do with the matter, in my estimation. The gravamen of the charge is that the official is dressed in government authority and yet represents the party in power. It makes no difference whether he receives \$300 a year or \$3,000 a year; the bad principle is in allowing that kind of influence to be exerted. The right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has been profuse in professions. With the assistance of his supporters he has helped to carry unanimously in this House a resolution that officials should not be allowed to take a partisan part in elections. Yet there is nothing in this Bill to carry that out—profession and profession only; when it comes to the practical fulfilment of the professions here in this Bill, simply nothing is done. How about that growing evil, that growing scandal in this country, of using public works and promises of expenditure of public money in special cases at by-elections or otherwise in order to influence the voters in favour of the government? Everywhere, in properly constituted countries, this is considered a wrong. It is a growing and grievous wrong in this country, yet there is nothing in this Bill to prevent it. The examples which we have had within the last two years of the use made by ministers and others of that kind of in-