

pieces and leave hundreds of names off the list, intentionally or unintentionally.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I must say that I am very much surprised at the mode in which the hon. gentleman is discussing this question. It does not appear to me that whether his recollection as to how many votes were polled and whether one candidate got 400 or more or less at one polling booth is correct or not ought to finally determine a question of this description. I tell the hon. gentleman that the law which was passed in 1891 went into effect when it was assented on the 16th April, 1891, and it declared :

When the number of voters on the list in any one polling subdistrict exceeds 400 it shall be lawful for the returning officer to provide two boxes for such subdistricts, dividing the registered list of voters alphabetically, so as to allow as nearly as may be an equal number of voters to deposit their ballots in each box, and for that purpose the returning officer may employ such additional clerks or deputies as may be required, and a separate check list, statement and return shall be kept and made for and in respect of each division of any such polling subdistrict.

That is the law passed in 1891. The hon. member may remember just what took place on some one or more of the polling subdivisions in his county, I cannot do so.

I was taking an active part in the contest on the occasion which he refers to, but I cannot possibly recollect what votes were polled for the respective candidates at the various polling subdivisions. I much regret that the hon. gentleman thinks I ought to have remembered those important particulars, and that I am not entitled to speak as to whether this Act was in operation, because I cannot at once call to mind the number of votes that were polled. It may have occurred to the hon. gentleman as a remarkable fact worthy of recollection, but I must confess my inability to carry matters of that importance in my mind. The hon. gentleman is not only in error as a matter of recollection, but I should think he would be a little reluctant to make so positive a statement as he has made in face of the existing law. It may be possible that the returning officer did not feel compelled under the statute to make the division in any particular district, because the statute says that when the number of votes exceeds a certain figure it shall be lawful for the returning officer to provide two boxes. There may have been 300, or 450, or 500 in a district, and it may be that the returning officer felt he had the right to exercise a discretion in providing for a subdivision of the poll in the district he refers to. But it nevertheless remains a fact that two elections have been held in the province of New Brunswick since this law passed, and in my own county I know polling districts where there were, side by side, two different polling booths, divided because of the num-

ber of votes which were on the list in that polling district. Take, for instance, the city of Fredericton where I myself ordinarily vote. In that city the number of electors is some 1,300 or 1,400, there are no less than four different polling boxes in the town. I may almost say they are within a stone's throw of one another, two in one building and two in another building, two in the court-house—the hon. member for York (Mr. Foster) knows where it is—and the other two in the city hall. Those were divided according to the alphabet. That occurred all over the province of New Brunswick, I am sure, though I cannot speak from personal knowledge and say it occurred here or occurred there. I know it must have occurred in Westmoreland, and I think if the hon. member for Westmoreland (Mr. Powell) were here, he would admit at once that in every large parish and polling division in that county there must have been a number of polling divisions in which this alphabetical break-up of the electoral lists took place. It is not open to question that this was the law, and it has been working without any complaint from any quarter, nor until the present moment have I ever heard suggested that there was any possibility of any wrong being done by the operation of that law. The Act I am now reading from was passed at my own instance. I think this very section of the statute which I have read was introduced into the provincial legislature by myself, and no one ever suggested that it would open the door to fraud of any kind. During these two elections I have yet to hear any person suggest that any fraud had taken place under it. Here a list is made up under the provincial law covering a whole polling district, according to the territorial limits laid down in the Act. The returning officer has that list before him, and he knows that every person can have access to that list who desires. For the convenience of the voters, and in compliance with such a provision as this, if it should become law, he divides that list up. If it should happen that a name is left off, it could only occur by accident, I am not willing to suppose the possibility of a man entrusted with a duty of that kind, who had taken his oath to perform his duty faithfully, would willingly omit a name. But should it occur by accident that a name was left off, there would be no difficulty in the voter getting his name put on again. If his name had been left off in the splitting up of that list, he would go to the place where, according to the initial of his name, he would expect to find his name, and if he did not find it there, he would call the attention of the returning officer at the poll to the fact that his name had been dropped, and it could be and would be put on. It would be put on because it is the original list which is the governing list, and which is only divided up for the convenience of

Mr. McINERNEY.