

because these statements have been quoted before. They were quoted the other evening in the House and no hon. member will dispute the authority of the statement I am making. Had the hon. Minister of Finance the idea in his mind when he spoke this afternoon that these people were not, as his own colleague had stated, fit or proper or capable persons to even vote in his country, because, if the statement of the hon. Minister of the Interior means anything at all, it means that they were not qualified to vote because they had been serfs and because they have been educated to look upon all government as tyranny? Therefore, does the hon. Minister of Finance pretend to say that this is giving us a proper test of the feeling of this country in regard to legislation of the importance of that which is now before the House? If that is the view or the idea of the government as to a proper test of public opinion upon any important issue or question. Then I say, God help the people. We have and we will have in all probability two constituencies in which public opinion may be tested. We have North Oxford and no doubt we will have the city of London. Both of these constituencies are intelligent constituencies. Both of these constituencies are looked upon to-day as Liberal constituencies. In view of the prestige that a minister of the Crown must naturally have in a by-election and during the first session of a new parliament is it not fair to assume that if the constituency of the city of London is opened, and if the acting Minister of Public Works (Mr. Hyman) is called upon to submit himself in a by-election there in order that he may become the Minister of Public Works, then, if you want to test public opinion on this issue, there is an opportunity for this government to test public opinion. If the government do test it in the city of London on this issue and this issue alone then, I think, the opposition in this parliament and the Conservative party who differ from the government on this important legislation will not be in a position to say that public opinion has not been tested in London, an intelligent and suitable constituency in which to test public opinion. The government have taken an undue and unfair advantage of the Conservative party and the people of this country, because, outside of one thing alone, there was nothing to tell the people that legislation of the character which is contained within the four corners of these Bills which have been introduced would be brought down. I say outside of one allusion and that was when the right hon. Prime Minister, previous to the 3rd November, stated that in all probability legislation would be asked for the purpose of creating a new province or provinces in the Northwest Territories. But, where the unfair part of the whole matter came in was that they did not give to the people any idea as to the serious character

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of the legislation that they have embodied in this Bill. If they had desired to be honest with the people I say they would have stated to them what they intended, or they would have given some indication of what they intended in connection with this question. They are not so brave when it comes down to the question of prohibition. For years the greater proportion of the temperance people were to be found in the ranks of the Liberal party and when this government, whose friends have been advocating temperance for years and years, were asked to pass prohibitory legislation, what did they do?

Did they show the same courage they have shown in this case? Not at all. They asked for a plebiscite and after putting the people of the country to hundreds of thousands of dollars of expense, and after the majority of the people of Canada pronounced in favour of prohibition, this government had not the courage to propose legislation in conformity with the will of the majority of the people. These are instances in which the government took an unfair advantage of the people of Canada. I might go on until past midnight showing the shortcomings of this government, but not a single one of their misdeeds exhibits a greater disrespect for the public feeling of Canada than their tactics with respect to this Bill. I have no doubt that section 16 in its original form would have passed this House, had it not been for the uproar in the country which caused the government to stagger and to propose an amendment. The Minister of Justice told us to-day that we all ought be capable of understanding what legislation proposed to this House means. We had the Minister of Agriculture, and we had the member from York (Mr. Campbell) and a few others who are not lawyers, brave enough to tell their constituents what this legislation meant, immediately that it was introduced. And yet, Sir, the most competent of them all to tell what the meaning of a legal clause is, the Minister of Justice himself declines to give an explanation of a clause which those gentlemen so glibly explained all about, and said it was so easy to understand. I do not pretend to say what clause 16 or clause 2 of this Bill means. I recognize that it requires a legal mind and a legal training to understand fully what these two sections propose to enact. This House is composed of business men, of lawyers, of men engaged in agriculture and of men representing various businesses and professions, and by an interchange of ideas we are able to legislate intelligently on different questions. The Minister of Justice and the legal members tell us what the meaning of the law is, and other gentlemen apply their business training to business propositions. Our constituents do not expect a layman to give a legal opinion,