

might be delayed for some period until there has been an opportunity to hear from those who are most interested, the people of the Northwest. I think that the second reading should not take place earlier than three weeks or a month later.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 70) to establish and provide for the government of the province of Saskatchewan.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

At six o'clock, House took recess.

After Recess.

House resumed at eight o'clock.

CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

House in committee on Bill (No. 5) respecting the census and statistics.—Mr. Fisher.

On section 30—every person employed in the execution of this Act to take an oath of office—

Hon. SYDNEY FISHER (Minister of Agriculture). When that section was previously before the committee, the suggestion was made that the getting of any information by an officer in addition to what was authorized in the schedules given him should be made an indictable offence. I promised to look into that and get the opinion of the law officers. I have done so, and am quite willing that this should be made an indictable offence, and I propose to introduce a new section, section 30 (a) next after this clause, to attain the object desired. I take it that the object of having the section stand has thus been met, and that the section may pass.

Mr. LENNOX. I desire to call the minister's attention to another point that was raised during the discussion of this section. I asked the minister to consider what officers would be included in the words of section 30—'every officer, census commissioner, enumerator, agent and other person employed in the execution of this Act,' and to say how his section would work in conjunction with section 17. I understood the minister then to say that probably the descriptive words in section 30 would include all the public officers described in section 17. I did not understand the minister to be positive on that point. It is a matter of some importance, and perhaps the minister will explain what conclusion he came to concerning it.

Mr. FISHER. I did not think it was necessary that officers employed by other authority, who furnish us information under this Act, should be called upon to take an oath under this Act. We would require

them to say that the information furnished us was what they had collected. But I do not think we could do more than that. They are not acting as officers of the department in any way, except as they supply information to us. But I think when they supply information it should be under some form saying that this was the information they had collected.

Mr. LENNOX. I think the minister and the committee should carefully consider the effect of this legislation. As the minister says, some of the information that would be given by these officials would be given merely as information received from other sources, and they would not be able to pledge themselves to the accuracy of it as coming from original sources. But they will be bound, under this section, to swear to the faithful and exact discharge of the duties that are expected of them and to the secrecy of the statistics collected. And under section 31, it is provided that these officials, in case they make a false declaration, will be guilty of an indictable offence. I call the minister's attention again to the position we are taking in connection with sections 17 and 30 taken together. We have certain officials appointed by municipalities or by the provincial government and bound to carry out the instructions of the authority that appointed them. Almost inevitably, I fear, at some time, the duties prescribed by the federal government under this Act will conflict with the duties as defined by the local authorities. And it is a pretty drastic measure to provide that a neglect of duty required by this government on the part of an officer appointed by the local government will subject the officer not merely to a fine, but to being declared guilty of an indictable offence. I think we come dangerously near usurping the powers of the local governments; and, in that view, I think this is not a wise provision.

Mr. FISHER. Section 31 provides that every person employed in the execution of this Act 'who makes wilful default in any matter required of him by this Act, or wilfully makes any false declaration touching any such matter,' is guilty of an indictable offence. Of course, if he makes a return saying that it is information he has collected in his capacity as an officer of the local authority, and wilfully falsifies that return, I think he should be held guilty of an indictable offence. But if he transmits the information he collects, he would carry out the full spirit of the law.

Mr. LENNOX. I do not wish to put more difficulties in the way of the Bill than necessarily meet it. Of course, if one makes a false declaration, he is not much to be commiserated in any punishment. But there is another feature. Section 31 says 'who makes wilful default in any matter required of him by this Act.' There may be a bona

Mr. SPROULE.