

Blair) will bear me out in saying that in some parishes in the county of Kent in the elections in which he took part, we poll as high as 600 and 700, and even 800 votes, but that cannot be done with the Dominion Elections Act, the Dominion ballot or the Procedure Act with regard to the federal election. Therefore, I submit, this clause cannot apply. The clause taking the local subdivisions and applying the Dominion Act to them would bring about a deadlock, it seems to me, on the day of election. I, therefore, move in amendment :

Provided there shall not be more than 300 voters in any subdivision.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Mr. Fitzpatrick). Perhaps, my hon. and learned friend would permit me to make an observation which may get over the difficulty. Under the election law of the province of New Brunswick, I find that the whole province is divided up into subdistricts, and the statute fixes the polling places in such subdistricts. It is provided, by amendment to the statute, that :

When the number of voters on the list in any one polling subdistrict exceeds four hundred, it shall be lawful for the returning officer to provide two boxes for such subdistrict, dividing the registered list of the 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.

I apprehend that what my hon. friend would like is some such provision for the Dominion elections, in order to avoid the difficulty he points out. In view of what has been said in the course of the debate, and seeing the force of the objections raised by the hon. gentleman and others on the other side of the House, the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals prepared an amendment which, I think, will meet the difficulty.

Where a polling division has more than 250 qualified voters, according to the voters' list, the returning officer shall provide separate and additional polling stations or rooms, according to the total number of qualified voters on the voters' list, near to one another for the polling of the votes in such polling division, and so that no more than 250, nor when practicable not less than 200, qualified voters' names shall be on the list for each polling station or room.

(2) The returning officer in such cases shall prepare, or cause to be prepared from the voters' list for the polling division a separate list for each polling station or room, made up in alphabetical order according to the initial letter of the surname of each voter. Each separate polling station or room shall be designated with the initial letters of the voters on the lists who are to vote in such station or room in the following manner, that is to say : from A to K, and from L to R, and from S to Z, or as the case may be.

(3) Every voter, the initial of whose name shall be included within the letters of the alphabet

designating a polling station or room, and contained in such list shall vote in the station or room so designated. The returning officer shall appoint a deputy returning officer for each station or room, and shall deliver to such deputy in due time a list certified by him to be a correct list of all voters on the voters' list whose surnames commence with the letters of the alphabet included within the letters by which such polling stations or rooms are designated.

That will provide for each congested district, such as that referred to by my learned and hon. friend, so that each polling station shall not have more than 250 qualified voters.

Mr. McINERNEY. I would propose an amendment that there shall not be more than 400 voters on any list for any polling subdivision.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. Let me point out that the polling subdivisions are under the control of the local legislature in New Brunswick, and when that legislature says that they shall extend over a certain territorial area, we must make some provision for polling the votes in that area. Then we want to adopt the very same system they have in New Brunswick for local elections.

Mr. McINERNEY. I do not think it is absolutely necessary to cut down the number to 250, or 200. My hon. friend from Cape Breton (Mr. McDougall) shows me a subdivision in his county in which there are 398 names on the list under the old Franchise Act we have repealed. In many subdivisions there are over 300 votes. It does not necessarily follow that because there are 300 votes on the list, we are going to poll 300 on election day. If you poll 240, you poll a very large average. It is easy to poll close on 300 votes, even under the Dominion Election Procedure Act. Therefore, I think that 250 is rather a low figure. But the amendment which is to be proposed by the Solicitor General is one that must meet with considerable opposition, I think, because it gives such tremendous powers, immediately preceding an election, into the hands of a man who is a political nominee. A returning officer is a political nominee, he is a man named by the party in power for the purpose of conducting the election, and he is named from the ranks of the party in power. He is always a man who sides with them in politics. It would be foolish, according to the prevailing ideas, for any administration to put into the hands of the returning officer these tremendous powers unless he was a man belonging to their side of politics, because in certain cases he might have a casting vote. Besides, you give the returning officer the power to subdivide a large district into subdivisions, and to subdivide the lists alphabetically, for instance, one from A to K, one from K to N, and so on. Then you give him in addition the power of saying who shall preside over the

Mr. McINERNEY.