

a half-yearly revision of this list, which is done by postmen, provincial employees and municipal employees, such as secretaries of municipal councils and so on. This is brought up to date by this half-yearly revision. In addition to that, not only do they take these effective steps to keep the list up to date but also they provide absentee voting and do away with the criticism which may result from someone who has moved to another electoral district and finds himself unable to vote in the new electoral district. He can vote in the electoral district, but his vote is applied to the district in which he resided prior to his moving.

In 1935 this facility was provided for only four classes of people. Everybody was frozen into their residence the same as now, only there was a period of about eight months between the election; and now we have a period of roughly sixty days. If it is the committee's thought to give consideration to permanent lists, such permanent lists will fail completely if absentee voting is not provided to electors who necessarily have to be absent from home. If you have permanent lists without absentee voting, the same situation as in 1935 will be repeated.

Mr. BELL (Carleton): What about the reverse? Will absentee voting fail without permanent lists?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: In the province of Saskatchewan, absentee voting is based generally on an affidavit taken at the poll. It is somewhat similar to the 1935 system, inasmuch as there is no permanent list. They have, however, the safeguard of comparing the signature against the one on the postal envelope. I would imagine there would be a lot of persons who had hopes of being elected who would find 2,000 postal ballots on the returning officer's desk. The candidate may have a majority of about 1,000. There would be a lot of "people from Missouri" who would want to know where these had come from. If you have a signature to compare against an application card, then there is one safeguard. However, they are not 100 per cent perfect.

There are systems which have been adopted in places such as in Australia where they have a compulsory vote. It might be interesting to the committee that in the last election in Australia roughly 10 per cent of the people used the facilities of absentee voting. There were 4,619,517 electors. There were 4,142,814 votes cast in their own polls. There were 145,360 postal votes. There were 324,553 absentee votes, and 6,844 declaration votes.

Declaration votes are affidavits taken by the elector at the poll in the case where his name is not on the list. Generally speaking, in Australia in the last 25 years, eight to ten per cent used the absentee postal facilities for voting. You must remember that in Australia in at least four of the states the lists are used for federal and state purposes, and that since the provincial and federal officials do the work the costs are greatly reduced in that manner.

Mr. BELL (Carleton): Is there the absentee voting system anywhere in which is used the system of registration as we have it in Canada?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: In a national election I think we are the only country which prepares a list in the manner we do. I do not know of any country in the world where a list is prepared after they issue the writ in the manner in which we do it. Most of the other countries in the commonwealth, Europe and the United States, have permanent registration. So there is, to my knowledge, no comparison to be made.

Mr. BELL (Saint John-Albert): Since 1935 has there been a great increase in the number of people who would be classed as absentee voters?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: I think that is the main complaint at each election since I have been in office, since 1934.

Mr. BELL (Saint John-Albert): That there has been an increase?