

War Department Opens Way to Take and Count Soldiers' Vote Same Day as B. C. Polling

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It has been arranged that the nominations of candidates under the Elections Act will take place on August 3 and elections on September 14, so that nominations and elections are six weeks apart. The provisions under the Military Forces Voting Act as to polling are quite different. Under the latter act the deputy provincial secretary must transmit by cable to the agent-general in London a list of the names of the candidates in the respective electoral districts, with their address and descriptions. The only time limitation as to voting is that it shall not continue later than the first day on which any poll is held in the province under the Provincial Elections Act, in other words, it must not continue later than September 14.

So far as the act is concerned, voting may begin on or about August 3, the day the agent-general receives the names of the candidates. We understand that the ballots have already been sent to London, so that the only delay will be that caused by printing the names of the candidates, which will not take long. If two or three days are required to complete the printing of the names on the ballots, there will still be nearly six weeks left for taking the vote for the election of candidates.

The counting of the vote, however, will not take place until a much later date, namely, not less than ten weeks nor more than eleven weeks after nomination day. This means that the results of the vote in the United Kingdom cannot be known until October 12 at the earliest, or October 26 at the latest, a month or more after the election results for the province have been made known.

All this is, of course, very ridiculous. If all the votes throughout the vast area of British Columbia can be taken and announced in a single day, it is absurd that six weeks should be required to take the vote in a small country like Great Britain, all parts of which are so easily accessible, and more absurd that an additional four or five weeks should be necessary to count the ballots and announce the results. It is not only unnecessary and ludicrous, but it would be intolerable to have to wait four or five weeks after British Columbia gives her decision, before the results in the United Kingdom are made known.

The reason for all the apparent absurdity lies in the fact that the act was drafted with the idea that the elections would not be confined to the United Kingdom, but would extend to the continent of Europe and remote parts of Africa. Mr. Bowser entertained the foolish idea that he would be allowed to send his emissaries with ballot boxes into Belgium, France, Italy and all other countries in Europe and Africa, where B. C. voters might be found. He was going to invade the trenches in Flanders and the hospital at Salonika, besides travelling in the wake of the armies in Mesopotamia and South Africa. All this nonsense was speedily knocked on the head by the War Department, and the vote now will not extend beyond the boundaries of the United Kingdom and various places in Canada and Bermuda. This being so, there is no longer any reason for prescribing long periods for taking the votes, and even longer periods for determining the results.

We can conceive of nothing more unsettling and demoralizing to our