

ployee sufficient to qualify as a voter under this Act." The judge states that he "should state facts and not conclusions. The returning officer and not the declarant is to judge of the right to be placed on the voters' list," meaning that he should state the amount of his earnings. I think, as the revising officer is only to require *prima facie* evidence, the solemn declaration should be sufficient, but I admit that that is not such a glaring case as some of the others I have quoted. Here is another person who claims to be registered as a fisherman, because he has boats and nets to the value of \$200, and continues:

"I am a tenant of property for which I have paid rent of \$40 per annum for the last two years."

He is rejected because he cannot be registered as a fisherman unless he owns real estate besides his nets, &c., and unless he is a tenant under lease. He is disqualified because he has omitted the words "under lease." I have seen, though I have not in my hands, any number of other rejected applications from the other riding of Elgin, rejected for even more frivolous reasons than these. In one case it was because the applicant stated that he has been the occupant for one year "preceding" the 1st January, 1886, instead of one year "next before" the 1st January. This keen-sighted judge saw such a distinction between "preceding" and "before" as to invalidate the application on that account. In another case a young friend of mine put in an application for a second person, which was rejected on the grounds that it was not in due form. To make that right he put in a second application in the words of the Act, "in money or money's worth," and that was rejected because it did not say whether it was in money or in money's worth. Probably some of my friends in the neighboring riding have such instances to bring up, and I will not go into any more of them. I wish to say, in a general way, of this line of conduct, that it is simply an act of oppression and taxation to the persons who are duly qualified to vote, but who cannot obtain the legal recognition or right without being put to the trouble and expense which this proceeding will cost them. Undoubtedly these persons will apply to the preliminary or final court of revision to get these quibbles set aside and have their rights recognized; but that will involve a large expense to these parties, and probably it will also involve a considerable expense to the country. I do not yet know upon what scale the revising officers are to be paid for the work, but it is reasonable to suppose that the pay will have some relation to the extent of their work; and if they can show that they have a large amount of work to do on this primary revision, in all probability they will claim larger salaries on account of it, even if they are not paid by the day while they are doing this work. We know it is to the interest of the revising officer to make as much work for himself as he can by forcing people to go to the primary or final court of revision instead of putting the names on the first list. I do not say this gentleman is doing it for that purpose, because I do not pretend to see into his motives; but it is a temptation to any irresponsible official in that position, to make work in the hope of making pay for himself, and that temptation ought to be removed. I say it will be a source of cost to the individual and to the community to deal with the primary applications in the way in which these have been dealt with. I hope the House will express such an opinion on the matter as will prevent other revising officers from acting in a similar way, and perhaps prevent this one from acting in a similar way in the future. But there are other matters besides applications on which I want to be informed, and which I intend to cover by my motion. If the motion is not sufficiently explicit to call for them, I hope I shall be allowed to amend the wording of it in such a sense as to obtain the information I want. I am

Mr. CASEY,

informed that instructions, and letters, have been sent to revising officers in regard to the cost of printing voters' lists, which I take to be a part of their duty, as expressed in my motion; and I intended to obtain those instructions along with the other papers by the motion I proposed. If the Minister will state to me whether he considers this motion sufficient, and will consent to its amendment if not sufficient, I shall be obliged to him. The Act calls undoubtedly for a considerable amount of printing, and we want to know whether we are getting it in the cheapest way possible, if any competition is allowed for it, or whether the printing of the lists is given entirely at the will and pleasure of the revising officer; also what the probable amount of it is likely to be in each constituency. With these remarks, I simply ask the Minister in charge of this subject, for any explanations he may give as to what instruction are issued, or will be issued, and when they will be brought down.

Mr. CHAPLEAU. There is no objection to laying before the House copies of the Orders in Council, circulars and instructions, or rather suggestions, that have been sent to the revising officers by the Department which has undertaken the administration of the Act. My hon. friend, I suppose, does not expect me to answer here the brief that he has laid before the House against the actions of the revising officer in the division which is represented by the hon. gentleman. According to the Act, one of the functions of the revising officers is to make a compilation of the voters to be put upon the list. He is to obtain his information from the lists of voters already existing, from the assessment rolls already existing, of which he is to get copies and that information is to be *prima facie* evidence that the voter's name should be put on the list; while it is also the duty of the revising officer to get any other information that he may procure to assist him in preparing these lists. It may be, as the hon. member has said, that some of the revising officers have understood that, either by necessity, or by the interpretation they gave to the Act, they have not to go beyond the voter's list and the assessment rolls already existing, in preparing their first list. Others, however, interpret the Act as allowing them to take other information to aid in the compilation of the list which they have to publish before the first of March. Of course, the revising officers have a certain amount of discretion in the exercise of their duty. The hon. gentleman has pointed out some of the inconveniences under which they labor. These might be remedied at the first revision; certainly at the last revision. With regard to the applications which appear to have been rejected, and which the hon. gentleman has partly read to the House, if there is any inconvenience it is that which necessarily arises from the working of a new Act which extends the franchise in this Dominion. Nobody will deny that in the first application of the law there will necessarily be a certain amount of difficulty, trouble and inconvenience; but I think, also, every one will admit that after the Act gets thoroughly into operation there will be much less difficulty and friction, and that system will be found to be easier than the present system of registering votes, and will be found to work more satisfactorily, more impartially, and less subject to partisanship in preparing the lists. I hope, and I am sure the country hopes with me, that after a little while there will be far less litigation before the courts than we have seen heretofore in the contestation of the lists. The lists, as prepared according to this Act, will be more complete, better made and more satisfactory in every respect; and if, after experience, it is found that any amendments are required, they can be adopted, so as to make the law more intelligible and give less trouble in its administration.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). I think the House was fairly entitled, at the hands of the Minister who has undertaken to reply to my hon. friend, to some explanation as to