

WITNESS: I shall deal with that before dealing with the English situation. I was able to get the information for which you asked. I found that with regard to the election to the house of representatives in 1919, the number of spoiled ballots was 3·46 per cent of the votes cast.

*By Mr. Heaps:*

Q. How do they define spoiled ballots in Australia?—A. They call any informal ballot a spoiled ballot; they do not distinguish between them; it is a ballot that is not counted for any reason whatsoever.

Q. Even if the ballot is not used?—A. If it is not counted it is an informal ballot, and that is the ballot referred to here. In 1919 the spoiled ballots were 3·46 of the whole.

*By Mr. MacNicol:*

Q. For the House—A. The House of Representatives.

Q. Not the Senate?—A. The House of Representatives. The percentage of informal ballots in 1922 was 4·51. In 1925, the first year of the compulsory voting, the percentage of spoiled ballots was 2·36. In 1928 the percentage was 4·90; in 1929 2·65 per cent; in 1931 3·48 per cent, and in 1934, 3·44 per cent.

Now, with regard to the Senate. Elections were held in the same years and they employ a system of proportional representation. In 1919 the percentage of spoiled ballots was 8·61; in 1922, 9·44; in 1925, 6·96; in 1928, 9·88—I took these figures from the official figures in the Australian General Reports in the library—in 1931, 9·60.

Q. There was no election in 1929?—A. I have no record of one. In 1931, as I have already stated, the number of spoiled ballots was 9·60, and in 1934, 11·35.

*By Mr. Glen:*

Q. It was getting worse?—A. They have the most extraordinary system of proportional representation there, and that should be explained.

Mr. MACNICOL: It is a cross between the alternative vote and proportional representation.

Mr. HEAPS: The interesting part of these figures is the fact that although you have compulsory voting in Australia the number of spoiled ballots has not really increased and everybody votes.

WITNESS: 95 per cent.

Mr. HEAPS: What I mean is although a large number of people voted the per centage of spoiled ballots has not increased.

Mr. MACNICOL: A large proportion of the spoiled ballots was made by conscientious objectors who spoiled their ballots deliberately by marking for everybody.

Mr. HEAPS: I do not think that is quite correct because in 1919 when they did not have compulsory voting, they had the same percentage of spoiled ballots.

WITNESS: 3·46. With regard to the rejected ballots in Canada, in 1930 the rejected ballots amounted to ·61 per cent in 1935, the spoiled ballots amounted to 1·03 per cent.

*By Mr. MacNicol:*

Q. The average in Canada for the 245 ridings is less than 200?—A. I did not have that figure, but I know it is very, very small.

Mr. HEAPS: Mr. Chairman, do you remember the percentage of spoiled ballots at the Winnipeg civic elections?

The CHAIRMAN: No, I do not.

WITNESS: It was rather over 2 per cent, if my memory serves me correctly.