

July 15, 1944

CANADIAN WAR SERVICE VOTING REGULATIONS

On June 13, 1944, Bill 135 was passed by the House of Commons. It is "an act to provide regulations enabling Canadian war service electors to exercise their franchise and Canadian prisoners of war to vote by proxy at any general election held during the present war; also to provide amendments to the Dominion Elections Act, 1938, consequently to such regulations or made necessary by the advent of the said war."

The bill was sponsored by the secretary of state on recommendations of the special House of Commons committee on service voting. Its provisions are effective for the duration of the war and six months thereafter. The act is in two parts, one to provide for voting by war service electors, and the other for prisoners of war.

War service electors vote directly for candidates in their home constituencies, while war prisoners vote by proxy through their next-of-kin in Canada.

The age limit of 21 years under which a civilian cannot vote has been abolished for the following war service electors: All Canadians serving in the active or home service forces; merchant seamen in manning pools or serving in ships; members of the Corps of Canadian Fire Fighters; members of the Canadian Red Cross Society or the St. John Ambulance Association serving outside Canada; and persons attached to overseas forces, such as war correspondents.

In addition certain other persons may vote under these regulations, but they must be 21 or over. These include members of the overseas headquarters staffs of the Canadian Legion War Services Inc., the National Council of the Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus Army Huts or the Salvation Army Canadian War Services.

Members of the reserve army, the University Air Training Corps or the Air Cadet Corps who are absent from home during training periods are also eligible to vote under the act.

All war service electors must specify the city, town or village where they ordinarily reside. They may vote only for candidates in their own electoral districts.

War service electors may vote for only one candidate unless they are qualified to vote in the electoral districts of Halifax, N.S., or Queens, P.E.I., when they may vote for two candidates each.

Seven voting territories have been designated, and there is a provision by which additional ones may be established to receive the votes of service personnel beyond the convenient reach of any of the seven already set up.

The voting territories are:

1. The province of Ontario with headquarters at Ottawa.
2. The province of Quebec, with headquarters at Montreal.
3. The provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, with headquarters at Halifax.
4. The province of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Yukon Territory, with headquarters at Edmonton.