

a disaster. I think it would be a good thing if we could give the Chief Electoral Officer a chance to deal effectively with a situation of that kind. I know it can be done, but if we could persuade the government and perhaps the opposition as well to select a proper time for holding an election, I mean so it could be held in good weather, then we could get away from a lot of this sort of thing and I believe it would be possible to get out the vote, because many people in the country are not the same as the honourable member for Vancouver, they have to travel distances of up to 20 miles, and you have muddy roads, and that sort of thing, and they just can't get out to vote.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: There is no man in the world who can tell in advance what the weather is going to be in any particular section of the country. It may be perfectly clear in one section while in another area you may have a very severe storm, and there is nothing you can do about it. You will recall that in one election recently down in the Lethbridge area was a very heavy snow storm which came up in a matter of just three or four hours.

Mr. DECORE: You would not call that a disaster, would you?

Mr. WYLIE: Well, in the case I cited it was not a disaster; it was a case where an election could not be held.

Mr. DECORE: Where would you draw the line?

Mr. MURPHY: I think, since this is an innovation in the Act, and it is a very important one, we may be facing an era unlike anything in the past. This subject is so important that I would suggest having it delayed and maybe it could be discussed under the section of the Act with respect to the qualifications of voters. It can be brought up at that time. It certainly is an innovation in the Election Act, and I am inclined to think and I think that the committee will agree with me because of its importance it might be delayed for discussion at another meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the opinion of the committee that we should postpone discussion?

Mr. CANNON: No, let us have a vote on it.

Mr. ARGUE: Mr. Chairman, I would agree with that suggestion. I for one am not in a position to say whether I am in favour of this or not without giving it further thought and I cannot see that anything would be lost by postponing consideration of it until at least one other meeting.

The CHAIRMAN: The matter is not one for me to decide. I will put the motion. Your suggestion is quite fair.

Mr. MURPHY: It is a point on which Mr. Castonguay very frankly admitted that he wanted guidance from this committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY: He has not got a great deal of guidance so far that would give him the direction that he would like to have. Someone suggested the figure of 50 per cent and others have suggested 20 or 25 per cent of the voters, and very few remarks have been made even respecting these figures. I am inclined to think that an innovation of this sort is one which should have more consideration since so much will depend on the judgment of Mr. Castonguay; and, as he points out, he would like to have some direction from this committee. Now, he has not had direction yet, but he has had it suggested that 20 or 25 per cent of the voters being affected might be taken as indicating a disaster condition.

Mr. DEWAR: I think with respect to a clause of this kind that we should see what Chief Electoral Officer means. We have been holding elections in Canada now for approximately 75 years and in all that time no comparable parallel has ever come up where this section would be required, as I understand it, is that right?