

provincial legislature or from the defeated candidates. That has happened four times in my county. One man was there for forty years; he was a stand-by; he died. His position was given to a defeated candidate; that man died, in turn—he was the man who opposed me in the election of 1921. His position was given to another man who also died, and upon his death the position went to another defeated candidate, a man who had run for the House of Commons more than three times. He died, and the man who had been a member of the legislature got the job.

The CHAIRMAN: But all of these men would have some knowledge of elections, although not sufficient to defeat you, Mr. Hanson.

The WITNESS: As a matter of fact, you will never be able to find a returning officer who has no political affiliations. If you have one, you have a fool, so to speak.

*By Mr. Kennedy:*

Q. The chief electoral officer is appointed by resolution of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. Why could he not be given authority to select the returning officers and their assistants in each province, if necessary, and let them be held responsible for the selection of the proper officers to run the election?—A. I would myself think it entirely proper to have the recommendations for the appointment of returning officers come from the Chief Electoral Officer. I would not think it advisable for the Chief Electoral Officer to be given unlimited discretion.

Q. Then what is the value of his recommendation?—A. Perhaps I had better explain what is in my mind. Such returning officers as go wrong now, go wrong because they think they have been given this duty in order that they may serve some political party purpose. You have knocked away four-fifths of the chances of that if you make the appointment come from the Chief Electoral Officer, because it is certainly then not a political party appointment. My reason for restricting the discretion, or suggesting the restriction of the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer, is that he is sitting in an office here in Ottawa and it is impossible for him to know the individuals throughout the country.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. That is a weakness?—A. That is the reason. You cannot get a perfect system. All you can do is to get one likely to work out, not only something better than the present system but something as nearly perfect as can reasonably be expected, and I think that if you gave the Chief Electoral Officer power to make that recommendation so as to make sure it was not a political recommendation, and at the same time restricted him to these public officers, you would in almost every case have proper service. There would be, however, cases in which there would be a doubt, and I would certainly give the Chief Electoral Officer in those cases the power to make a fresh recommendation in his discretion without proving any impropriety on the part of the returning officer he has recommended, so that the returning officers should know that they are solely in the hands of the Chief Electoral Officer, as far as the continuation of their appointment is concerned, and that the Chief Electoral Officer might at any time make a recommendation for their removal if he thought it was in the public interest that they should cease to act as such.

Q. You would have no check on him?—A. I would make certain restrictions. For example, supposing he appointed a sheriff as the one at the top of the official list and then he found that the sheriff was not satisfactory; his next recommendation would be another man from the official list.