

What I am so anxious to make plain tonight is that what those of us who favour this are seeking is simply that the person who comes here—I am a minority representative from Calgary West, and 148 others of us are in the same position—will undertake that when we come to parliament we shall have a majority of the persons who vote voting for us as against our nearest and our last opponent. That is what this thing is, and it means nothing more than that. It is not complicated in any sense whatever, except to give every voter a choice between the last two persons, exactly as is done in the conventions where we are nominated by our parties to run for office in this dominion parliament.

I want to use the illustration used by my honourable, able and kindly friend, the hon. member for Davenport, who got annoyed at me a moment ago. In the constituency of Pincher Creek there were three men running, Cook, Bossenberry and Allison. On the first count neither of the three had a majority. Then Allison, who, I think, belonged to my party—I am not sure—had the lowest number of votes of the three. In the meantime, as the hon. member for Davenport said, Bossenberry was running ahead of Cook. But when they counted the No. 2 votes of Allison, who dropped out, it meant that Cook had beaten Bossenberry, and it meant taking the minority man and giving him the majority. Why should that not be? The decision was then between Cook and Bossenberry, and the majority of the voters wanted Cook.

How can we here who believe in democracy and who do much talking about majority rule, conceding that to be the principle upon which we operate in a democracy, quarrel with the idea that the persons who come here should have a majority of the votes of the persons who are sufficiently interested to vote? How anyone who believes in democracy can put up an argument against that is quite beyond me. I think the difficulty is this, Mr. Chairman. You have heard of our province, I am quite sure, starting some rather original things politically and in many other ways. It is so easy at a distance to say we have that crazy system of the single transferable vote. I have talked to a goodly number of members privately about this matter. I say it is not blameworthy on their part, but I found a number whom one might think would think otherwise who simply did not understand the system. It is the simplest thing in the world. I guarantee one thing, namely, that he who represents the people of a constituency will be sent here to represent them by a majority of the people in that constituency, and it means nothing else.

Mr. FAIR: I am glad to know there are so many members who are interested in the way

in which Canadians vote. I think the privilege of the ballot is being abused, and before it is too late we should have some reform in the method of voting. I do not think the majority of the people are satisfied with the single "X" marked on the ballot. I am sure that when the single transferable vote is properly explained to them we shall have no trouble whatever in carrying that system into effect. I wish to give notice now that at the next session I intend to introduce a bill dealing with this matter. If it should so happen that I am not returned at the next election I have no doubt there will be somebody else here who will take steps to introduce legislation to bring about the desired result. I hear a C.C.F. member saying something under his breath. I have nothing to fear from that quarter, when a C.C.F. candidate loses his deposit in my constituency.

Section agreed to.

Sections 26 to 36 inclusive agreed to.

On section 37—Who may vote at advance polls.

Mr. CASE: I suggest that the application of this section should be considerably broadened, inasmuch as I take the position that the advance poll exists for the convenience of those who desire to cast their ballots. In the recent Ontario elections, while advance polls were held in my constituency, members of parliament were not allowed to vote at an advance poll, which necessitated their remaining over until the following Monday to cast their ballots.

There is one comparison I would make between the provision contained in this section and a similar provision in the Ontario act. Here it refers to commercial travellers. They leave out the word "commercial." The term "traveller" would be sufficient. I do not see why it should be qualified by the word "commercial." I wonder if this section could not be broadened in its application with respect to those who may vote at advance polls. A good citizen who, of necessity, must be absent, either on business or for some other reason, desires to cast his ballot in any event. There might be some danger of impersonation in the larger centres; but in the majority of cases, if a citizen applies for the right to vote at an advance poll, I think the section should be broad enough to enable him to cast his ballot, if he knows he will be absent on election day. I suggest to the minister that he remove the word "commercial" and simply leave it "traveller."