

Members of the Committee that a vote of thanks is moved and earnestly offered by the Committee to the Chairman for his impartiality, etc.

The Chairman since 1900 has been the Hon. D. C. Fraser, M.P., of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. The vote of thanks in 1903 was adopted on motion of James Clancy, M.P., Conservative member for Bothwell, and that of 1902, was adopted on motion of A. C. Bell, M.P., Pictou, Nova Scotia, and E. A. Lancaster, M.P., Lincoln, Ont., both Conservatives.

The work of this Committee is somewhat exacting, but under the present administrations it has always been pleasant. Everything brought up was investigated and inspected just as the books of well regulated and well managed financial institutions are annually examined, and the officials court investigation because they know everything has been properly done.

The Law as to Ballots.

It had long been found that the form of ballot used in the Dominion parliamentary elections in Canada was open to very great abuses. The whole question was taken up by the present liberal Government and many designs of ballots were examined. A perfectly novel principle was finally adopted and embodied in chapter 12 of the Acts of 1900, as section 48. The points of departure were:

(a) That the paper for the ballots was no longer supplied by the local printers, but was sent out from Ottawa to the Returning Officers.

(b) This enabled the Government to instruct its officers to supply a distinctive paper such as could not be bought locally. A paper was devised and specially manufactured of a peculiar colour, not used in trade and difficult to match, and it was made with a water mark showing a distinctive device, upon each ballot, when held up to the light. This water mark could only be imitated in a large paper mill with much expense of money, time and trouble. It could not be made in secret as many workpeople are of necessity concerned in the manufacture. The Act, while prescribing the thickness of the paper, did not enjoin these additional precautions. They were adopted by the Government in carrying out the Act.

(c) The Act prescribed other important changes. The ballot papers were to be numbered and stitched in books and were to bear the printer's name. In that way a check upon the actual number printed might be had and the sequence of the numbers would betray any attempt to pass off a fraudulent ballot.

(d) While these novel precautions were taken the most important point of all was also secured. The ballot is absolutely secret. No trace remains upon it after it is dropped into the box by which a voter can be identified.

(e) An additional and novel peculiarity was adopted in section 41. Every Returning Officer is supplied with a stamp and he must stamp every ballot. A new stamp is provided for every election. The name of the district is on each, but the year changes and the shape of the stamp varies.

The new ballot was introduced in the general election of 1900. It was found to be a great improvement upon the old form, but the name of the electoral district, the date and printer's name were printed on the face of the ballot at the head, and although they occupied the space fully, there were little spots where a black pencil mark would show, and a number of ballots were still spoiled.

This led to the existing modification of the pattern, set forth in the Act passed the following year (chapter 16 of 1901). In this design the face of the ballot is so printed with broad black bands that it is not possible to make a black mark excepting in one of the spaces where a candidate's name appears. All the necessary printing excepting the names of the candidates is done on the back and the utmost ingenuity cannot find on the face a wrong place where a mark will show.