

most complicated to election officers and political workers. The right to vote as an absentee voter is limited to four classes of persons, namely: fishermen, lumbermen, miners and sailors actually engaged or employed in any of these occupations on polling day at a distance of not less than 25 miles from their ordinary polling stations and in the same province. This limitation gave rise to a lot of dissatisfaction and misunderstanding in most electoral districts and the application of the absentee voting provisions complicated to a great extent the duties of the election officers, which were already intricate enough. Absentee voting was not resorted to to a great extent. There were only 5,334 absentee voters' ballots cast in the whole of Canada on polling day. Of this number 1,533 ballots were rejected, leaving only 3,801 valid ballots.

Furthermore, the absentee voting procedure was the cause of a considerable increase in the cost of the holding of the general election. In the first place, a large number of blank forms, ballots, etcetera, had to be printed to supply each polling station with a certain number. This printing cost upwards of \$16,000.

In the second place, a list of the names, addresses and occupations of the candidates nominated in each province had to be furnished to each polling station. Except in the province of Saskatchewan, where there is an interval of two weeks between nomination and polling days in every electoral district, this list could not be printed until after the close of nomination on the seventh day before polling day. For obvious reasons, the list was printed in four different cases in the western provinces and it was printed in Ottawa only for the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

The delivery of these lists of candidates necessitated the use of aeroplanes in several electoral districts and it has also made it necessary to deliver the ballot boxes by messengers in most rural polling divisions at great cost. Otherwise, most of these boxes would have been sent by mail at parcel post rates. The cost of the application of the absentee voting provisions is not yet available, but it is estimated that it will be close to a quarter of a million dollars. In my opinion, therefore, the result of the last general election shows that absentee voting is a costly, ineffective and complicated procedure which should not be resorted to at any future dominion election.

The CHAIRMAN: Your question, Mr. Carter?

Mr. CARTER: On the statement that has just been made, is there any special reason for an abnormal number of spoiled ballots?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: Yes. I think it has been shown that at that time most electors, especially in large urban centres, did not know the name of their electoral district. They may be living on the dividing line between one constituency and another. There were no facilities, such as maps, and postal guides, in each polling station in Canada for the elector to establish conclusively in what electoral district he was entitled to vote. So, most rejected ballots were attributed to the elector who had cast a vote in the wrong electoral district.

Under the service voting procedure, which is a form of absentee voting used, in each voting place we supply an index book and map of all cities in Canada having more than two electoral districts. In addition to that they have a book of excerpts of the postal guide. While this is not perfectly normal at too many ballots, that information is supplied on that basis. It gives the service elector an opportunity to identify clearly which electoral district he votes for. But to provide that facility for each polling station in Canada would be a very costly experience.