

Proclamation ordering taking of plebiscite.

(2) The governor in council may by proclamation order the taking of a plebiscite for the purpose of submitting to the ordinary voters and to the Canadian service voters the question set out in subsection one of this section.

Contents of proclamation.

(3) The proclamation shall state fully the question to be submitted at the plebiscite in the same words and form as it will appear on the ballot paper pursuant to the provisions of subsection one of this section.

Idem.

(4) The proclamation shall also state the date fixed as polling day for such plebiscite, which shall be a Monday and the same in all electoral districts. Such proclamation shall further state the respective days and dates upon which Canadian service voters, as defined in this act, stationed within or without Canada, may cast their votes at such plebiscite.

Publication.

(5) The proclamation shall be published forthwith in a special issue and in at least two ordinary issues of the *Canada Gazette*.

Mr. MacINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I am going to take exception to the form of the ballot. I agree with the hon. member for Hastings-Peterborough that this ballot is confusing. I have voted on a number of plebiscites—we call them by-laws—in municipal elections. The question asked on such occasions is whether one is in favour of or against a certain proposal. I have never seen a question appearing twice on the ballot.

On this ballot there are two questions, although it is the same question stated twice. In my opinion this is bound to cause confusion. People do not vote on questions like this every day; they are not accustomed to dealing with the written word, as are members of parliament. They have not had the training in these matters that lawyers have had. They will come in and read the first part of the ballot, and become confused. The whole thing is stacked against the voter, at the very beginning. For instance, a voter will read the question opposite which the word "yes" appears. Then, he may scratch out the "yes" and put down a big "no," with the result that a spoiled ballot has been cast.

I spoke to the representative of this group on the special committee, and pointed out to him my objection, while the committee was sitting. In my opinion the question should appear only once, and the words "yes" and "no" should be enclosed in brackets or in divisions at the end. Then the voter could make a cross either for or against in the "yes" or "no" division. In that way the ballot would not have to be repeated.

Mr. REID: Was this possibility discussed in the special committee? I agree with what other hon. members have said, namely that this

ballot will confuse the voter. I believe the whole thing could be simplified by having the question appear only once, and then by providing places for "yes" or "no" votes.

Mr. McLARTY: This matter was discussed in committee. I have no violent feeling as to the form in which the question should appear. When the matter was first considered I was somewhat of the opinion that one question would be appropriate, and that spaces for "yes" and "no" could be provided. I believe, however, that the action of the committee was governed entirely by the experience of the chief electoral officer, who has suggested this form of ballot. My recollection is that it has been used extensively in practically all the provinces, in connection with the Canada Temperance Act.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Not very often.

Mr. McLARTY: Members of the special committee were surprised to learn the number of times it had been used.

Mr. LOCKHART: How long ago was that?

Mr. McLARTY: Between 1920 and 1925, if I remember correctly the dates the chief electoral officer gave us.

Mr. LOCKHART: That is sixteen years ago; we have a new generation now.

Mr. McLARTY: I would suppose that a change of ballot is not something which would change with the generation. However, according to the report given to the special committee, which was after some argument adopted by it, it was decided that this was the form which was most appropriate.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): There must be a large number of members of the legal profession in Ontario who are familiar with the provisions of the municipal act of that province whereby at annual elections what are known as money by-laws are submitted to the voters. They have them right here in Ottawa. I have never voted on one, but I know that the people are simply asked: Are you in favour of a bond issue for so-and-so?—and they are usually asked to answer "yes" or "no."

Mr. REID: They write "yes" or "no" on the ballot.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That seems to be a most simple method. In this instance the question would be asked: Are you in favour of releasing the government?—and the answer would be "yes" or "no." That procedure is familiar to the voters of Ontario,