

be practical to ask for the opinion of the candidates, let us say, of the two major parties involved in the constituency in question; and if the candidates were nominated representatives at the previous election?

The CHAIRMAN: It might happen that some people would be interested.

*By Mr. Arque:*

Q. You do it in your selection of enumerators. There is some consultation in that case. I would like to have the opinion of the Chief Electoral Officer.—A. Naturally, I would like to ascertain from all authoritative sources the extent of the disaster, something which would support the returning officer's recommendation. I feel that any recommendation which a returning officer would make to me would be acceptable; but I would feel more comfortable in making my decision if I could get substantiation from the returning officer as well as from other people. I would consult the best sources available to me. I would try in every case to substantiate the returning officer's report from some other source.

Q. Would not the opinions of the major political parties, in so far as they could be ascertained, be quite an important thing?—A. My predecessor and I have worked in close cooperation with all national organizations. So I would consult them.

Mr. APPLEWHAITE: In actual practice the returning officer would report to you at the instance of the candidates. They would be the most interested people.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: I move the passage of the amendment.

Mr. MURPHY: I think the section has a lot of merit. But I wonder, when we consider this particular section, if we might not also consider some way of getting around the disaster in this way: that would be a qualification on the voters. I think this might be considered in that other section as well, but possibly some provision could be made whereby the people who would ordinarily be deprived of their franchise could, under the Elections Act, be permitted to vote in another poll.

If for some reason or other, for example, there were five polls closed, and, let us say, 20 per cent of the voters were represented in those polls, there may be availability for voting by those same people at another poll.

Mr. VIAU: Within the same riding.

Mr. MURPHY: With respect to that matter, if, let us say, 20 polls could not open in view of a national disaster, I wonder how many electors of that area would be able, in view of the disaster, to get to other polls?

The WITNESS: I think this shifting around would remove some of the safeguards that ordinarily are required at elections. I am thinking of one of the basic qualifications of a voter, that he is entitled to vote in the district and polling division in which he is ordinarily a resident on the date of the issue of the writ. That is the only place that he can vote. If an elector is to be allowed to move to some other place some notice must be given to the candidates, the affected electors and other interested persons and I think that the shifting of electors from one poll to another would open the door to all kinds of abuses. From the point of view of the returning officer and from our point of view it would be difficult to shift people to another poll.

Mr. APPLEWHAITE: Yes, in any time of great disaster.

Mr. WYLIE: Mr. Chairman, I think we can give the Chief Electoral Officer more power in a situation of this kind. We would have avoided a lot of discussion back in 1940, you recall the situation which developed in that year when 50 per cent of the voters in the southern portion of the province were not able to vote, practically the whole of that part of the province was blocked with snow and it was impossible for people to travel then, twelve or fifteen or even twenty miles to vote, they just stayed at home. That is what you might call