

affiliations, or, in other words, as nearly as may be in equal numbers from among the supporters of each of the principal political parties which may be expected to have candidates in the field. There would then remain no *prima facie* reason for suspecting an election officer of partiality, the justification which the present system affords for dismissing returning officers and appointing fresh ones in large numbers would no longer exist, the experience and knowledge of their districts gained by one set of returning officers would not be lost as it now generally is, and the conduct of elections would be put on a footing which would in the long run, be much more satisfactory to all concerned.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. How would you arrive at this Utopian scheme?—A. I do not think it presents any difficulties; it sounds much more Utopian than it is.

Q. Assuming we achieve a permanent returning officer of some kind, how would you arrive at the appointment of subordinate officers?—A. By a saw-off method; partly by the character of the man appointed deputy returning officer—

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. Has not the returning officer the absolute say about it?—A. Yes.

Q. You cannot dictate to him whom he is to appoint.

The CHAIRMAN: Unless you put it in the statutes.

The WITNESS: I would not suggest that you should make any hard and fast rule because I do not think it is wise. There should be an inquiry in each case. A hard and fast rule would be unreasonable. The way I would get at the same result would be to require the returning officer to be a public officer. I would list the public officers and from amongst those he should be chosen. I would like to go further and put these in the day in which they should be chosen. I would like to recommend the appointments to come, not from either party but from the Chief Electoral Officer and restrict his discretion to the appointment of public officers. I would put the sheriff first, then the registrar, and perhaps the prothonotary or the clerk of the court, the city clerk, and the city assessor—some public officers of that kind—so that you would not have more than perhaps a dozen election officers.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. Let us analyse that a little further. In the province of Nova Scotia until recently—if it has not been changed—the sheriffs are appointed by the provincial government and may only be removed for malfeasance in office. In the province of New Brunswick they are appointed annually. They are not always changed with a change of government, but frequently they are, and nearly always the appointees are, in the case of death or of changes, appointed by the party in power for more or less political reasons. We will assume their fitness for the office. In the case of a sheriff you nearly always get a political appointee. In the case of Nova Scotia when the present government came in every sheriff was a Liberal, having been appointed within the past forty years, and the new government was powerless to remove them. In fact, they were defied to remove them when asked to do so. Conditions may have been changed since, but you certainly would not be improving conditions by appointing men of that type.—A. Not if you stop there, but you do not need to stop there.

Q. Then let us go on to the registrar of deeds. I think they hardly ever are removed from office at a change of government, but they die like everybody else, and almost invariably the new ones are recruited from members of the