

## Item No. 7

49 Palmerston Avenue,  
Town of Mount Royal, P.Q.  
SEPTEMBER 11th, 1953.

The Chief Electoral Officer,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:—

At the General Election of August 10th, 1953, I was a candidate in the Electoral District of St. Antoine-Westmount. Such being the case, it is my privilege, I believe, to send to you suggestions for improvements in the Canada Elections Act which seem desirable to me. I have several such suggestions and to explain why I feel them to be desirable, I would like first to describe certain occurrences in St. Antoine-Westmount on Election Day, August 10th, 1953.

It was reported to me by Agents that I appointed to polling stations that there were 89 instances of two votes being cast in one name in 13 polls. The numbers of the polls and the number of such occurrences in each, as reported to me, appear below as appendix "A". These can be checked against the records in the Poll Books. That is to say, that in 89 cases in 13 polls an elector arrived at the poll to find that a vote had already been cast in his name, but was able to identify himself satisfactorily, and having taken the oath was allowed to vote. This figure cannot include those people who, on discovering that a vote had been cast in their name, left the poll unaware that they nevertheless had a right to vote. Nor can it include votes that were cast in the name of electors who were out of town on the day of election, although several such instances have come to light, and persons who engage in these practices would naturally concentrate on personating electors who are known to be unable to vote themselves. A fairly conservative estimate of the number of cases of personation in St. Antoine-Westmount on August 10th would be 1,000.

Three men were arrested at the polls on charges of personation. It is interesting to note that in two cases I personally was at the poll in question and requested that a warrant be made out, and in each case the offender had arrived at the poll accompanied by three other men who left when the arrest was made. In the third case the accused man was accompanied by six other men who were arrested. As you know, the majority of election officials and candidates' agents at a poll are women and it is difficult for them to bring about the arrest of a personator when they are moving in groups of four or more men.

The conduct of the Deputy Returning Officers was in many cases unsatisfactory. When it became apparent that a large number of persons were attempting to vote under false names, it was necessary for candidates' agents to ask that many voters take the oath. In some Polls the Deputy Returning Officers refused for a while to require that the oath be taken on the grounds that it took too much time. In Poll 39 it was discovered that there were 175 ballots in the box, initialed by the Deputy Returning Officer and only 169 names entered in the Poll Book. A man was arrested at Poll 23A for personation on a warrant issued by the Deputy Returning Officer. Subsequently the Deputy Returning Officer refused to sign the charge for the police.

It is not my intention in this report to suggest that the result of the election in St. Antoine-Westmount would have been different had these things not taken place, nor is it my intention to place the responsibility for them on any individual. It is, however, my strong feeling that an Act under which these things are possible is in need of improvement.