

be, as they are in most cases, women. We have sought to make the measure applicable to everybody who is doing service for Canada and for the cause for which Canada is fighting in this war. By way of removing all doubts which seem to exist, we have specifically mentioned the fact that a person's being an Indian, if he be a soldier, will not exclude him from the vote. My own belief was that even under the statute as it stood, an Indian who was a soldier could vote, but there seems to have been some doubt on the subject, and that doubt is removed.

Mr. MARCIL: Has the minister considered the case of the reservists who enlisted in the French and Belgian armies?

Mr. DOHERTY: The question was considered in connection with a similar one in regard to Canadians in the Imperial army. The Bill, as it is presently drafted, does not provide for their vote. As I said in regard to the other question, this is not because I do not quite recognize the desirability of their being enabled to vote if it were practically possible, but because, notwithstanding consideration of different methods of getting at it, we were reluctantly forced to the conclusion that we could not find the machinery to carry it out, without creating machinery altogether out of proportion to the number of persons who would be in a position to avail themselves of it. With regard to that, as with regard to all details of the Bill, we shall be very glad of suggestions looking to improvement.

As to the method of proceeding to the election, the principal change is that this Bill proposes to provide a complete machinery overseas for the taking of the soldiers' vote, practically as though you were conducting an election over there. The results, of course, at the end of the proceeding will be communicated over here to the proper officers, and those results, combined with the results of the election as held under the ordinary provisions in Canada, will determine the result of the election. The reason for this is found, in the first place, in the increased magnitude of the work to be done over there, and in the second place, and perhaps principally, in the difficulties and the unsafety in many respects surrounding transportation between Canada and the Old Country. Under the law as it stood, for example, provision was made for the returning by each officer who took votes upon the other side to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in this country of the votes so taken, and

the assorting of those votes as between constituencies by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery over here, and the forwarding of those votes to the returning officers of the different electoral districts to be counted. That might have been quite feasible in dealing with a relatively small number of votes, and if conditions with regard to transportation were such as they were at the time of the passing of the Act. Under present conditions, the carrying out of the Act would be attended with the serious objection that the ballots taken on the other side, before they could be counted at all, would be exposed to the risk of being lost in transit. In view of these considerations, we have provided for the carrying out of the election from the initial proceedings the providing and distribution of ballots and all necessary documents, down to the counting of the votes overseas. This will necessitate the provision of an officer whose tenure of office shall last for the election only, who shall exercise overseas the functions belonging in connection with an election to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. It is intended he shall be appointed as an Assistant Clerk of the Crown in Chancery and shall exercise overseas the powers exercised generally speaking by the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in connection with a general election.

Sir SAM HUGHES. He will have independent powers?

Mr. DOHERTY: For the purposes of the election operations, he shall be the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery over there. This method of dealing with the subject also calls for provision for the counting of the ballots overseas. This is a matter which has had considerable thought. It is certainly very important that there should be provided competent and reliable officers with regard to whose impartiality we should have every guarantee. As meeting those requirements the proposal of the Bill is that there should be appointed a certain number of officers who are designated as "special returning officers," and that each of these special returning officers shall have a clerk assigned to him. After the ballots have been returned respectively to the Commissioner of Canada to France; and the secretary of the High Commissioner in London, and, in this country, to an officer to be known as the general returning officer; these special returning officers with their clerks shall proceed to the sorting of the envelopes and counting of the ballots, and shall furnish statements of the results to the commissioner to France and the secre-