

Mr. BURDETT. While approving most of the letter and spirit of the Bill, I would suggest that we go a little further and that the ballot should not only be initialled by the deputy returning officer, but that it should be initialled also by authorized agents of the opposing candidates. Deputy returning officers are not always emblems of purity. A deputy returning officer, if he is so inclined, may issue a few ballots before the polling occurs with his initials upon them, and they can be circulated outside the booth, and a man may get his five dollar bill and the ballot already marked, provided he goes in and brings out one with the initials upon it not marked. That may occur, and if the initials of the deputy returning officer and the agents of the opposing candidates are allowed to be put upon the ballot as well, nothing of this kind can occur. Speaking on another point of the Franchise Act, I think that men who have gone to the States with the intention of residing there, ought not to be allowed to come back here and vote and thus affect the conduct of affairs in a country that they have left practically forever. Respecting the matter of postage, it is one of great importance to those who object to votes on the list. Now, these lists have to be registered and sent out at a cost of eight cents, and I think it ought to be made as cheap as possible to those gentlemen who revise the list, because under the present Act enough trouble and difficulty occur to both political parties.

Mr. BARRON. I, too, would like to see the Bill become law, including the suggestion made by my hon. friend from Hastings (Mr. Burdett), because it has come under my own notice that electors go to the polls and take the oath that they are British subjects by birth, relying upon the fact that, though they had removed to the States, they were born British subjects. But my main object in addressing the House now is to draw the attention of the Minister of Justice and also the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill to the fact that this Bill should not become law at all events this year, because it specifies what is a qualification for an elector. It may be that the revising officer in accepting declarations, knowing what is the qualification of an elector by this Bill, might require the clause setting forth that I am a British subject by birth and not the subject of any foreign country, to be incorporated in the declaration. We know that the revising officers, by statute, began their work on 1st June last, and if this Bill became law, without a clause being provided that it shall not be retroactive, those officers might hold that declarations received before this Bill became law would be bad, inasmuch as they would not contain the whole of this paragraph, "I am a British subject by birth and not the subject of any foreign country." I, therefore, suggest to the Minister of Justice and the promoter of this Bill that there should be a clause making it not applicable to the present revision, or, at all events, not to become law until after this year.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). It is only the form of the oath that the Bill seeks to amend. A person coming from the United States to Ontario could take the present oath because he could swear, and with something of a clear conscience, that he was a British subject by birth, notwithstanding that at the same time he was a

citizen of the United States. The objection taken does not hold, because in the declaration required by the revising officer the party who seeks to have his name placed on the preliminary list only swears that he is a British subject.

Mr. BURDETT. The revising officer can accept the declaration whether this clause is in it or not.

Mr. MASSON. Surely the question as to what the revising officer may do cannot interfere with the passage of this Bill. It will be his duty to act in accordance with the Franchise Act and this Act, and I understand that the hon. member for Brockville (Mr. Wood), also proposes to amend the Franchise Act bearing on the same subject. I am glad to see that made clear which was obscure. I would suggest that a further step be taken, and it should be declared that the person making the declaration is not only not the subject of a foreign country, but has not filed any declaration of intention to become the subject or citizen of a foreign state. In many of the Western States persons resident a few months are allowed certain privileges as citizens, provided they file a declaration with the county clerk of their intention to become citizens of the United States. I think such a clause should be embodied in the Bill as drawn, because, to use the sentiment expressed by Mr. Blaine, that Canadians should be taught that they cannot be Americans and Canadians at the same time. Canadians must be taught that they cannot be American citizens and at the same time come here and assist in controlling the legislation of this country.

Mr. FRASER. That argument does not apply to this case. The fact of a man declaring his intention to do a thing is not the performance of it. If so every man who declared his intention to steal would be entered as having stolen. I understand the hon. gentleman to say that the Bill should cover cases where the parties had simply declared their intention to ultimately become American citizens.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). Some of the States permit a man who declares his intention, and makes a formal declaration to that effect, of becoming an American citizen, to enjoy all the rights of American citizenship although he may not have been a resident long enough to have become a citizen.

Mr. FRASER. He has only certain rights concerning municipal matters, and he is not a full citizen. He is not a full citizen unless he has taken out his naturalization papers, as in this country. There is no necessity of placing such a clause in this Bill.

Mr. MASSON. In the Western States men, on filing such declarations, secure many of the rights of citizenship. If these people choose to go to a foreign country and make a declaration of their intention to become citizens, it is only right that we should provide that they should have nothing to do with the Government of this country.

Mr. CHARLTON. The object of making this declaration is to enable persons to hold real estate. In many States aliens are not allowed to hold property, but in no State, I believe, does the filing of such declaration entitle such a person to the right of citizenship and suffrage. The person has simply the right to acquire property; but he is not a