

the question of direct representation for those in the forces. The object of the committee is to provide the best means possible for the exercise of the franchise by the service personnel. I am convinced that proposal is the best way.

Mr. ISNOR: What proposal is that?

Mr. GILLIS: Direct representation. I notice that on February 8th the province of Saskatchewan in their speech from the throne definitely state they are providing legislation for that particular purpose.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Not for the transferable vote?

Mr. GILLIS: No, direct representation. You suggested, Mr. Chairman, that it was beyond the terms of reference of this committee and might more properly come under the Representation Act. If that discussion is to be ruled out I should like to know that. I do not intend to waste the committee's time in pursuing it if it cannot be done under the terms of reference of this committee.

The CHAIRMAN: My own opinion is that so far as this committee making a recommendation to the House it is beyond the terms of the reference but under one clause here—I am just trying to find it—"To survey all aspects of the problem", I think perhaps we would be entitled to have a discussion in the committee. Personally I do not think it would do any harm.

Mr. MACNICOL: On what?

The CHAIRMAN: On direct representation, that the active service voter should elect his own members in addition to the 245 members in the House. Mr. Gillis brought this up.

Mr. MACNICOL: In other words, let the soldiers elect members of Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. For instance, as I take it there will be a certain unit established of voters, and there will be so many direct representatives from the forces.

Mr. McCUAIG: We would not have the power to do that even if we decided to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think so. I do not think we have power to make any recommendation because I think it is beyond the terms of this reference.

Mr. McCUAIG: Not necessarily beyond the terms of the reference but it is a constitutional question that I do not think we can decide here.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. As a matter of fact, I have here a legal opinion that it would require an amendment to the British North America Act. The only thing is that we can decide today whether we should have a discussion on this matter or not. Personally, as chairman, I am quite willing to rule that the term, "to survey all aspects of the problem", would entitle us to discuss the matter.

Mr. McCUAIG: It is all very well for the provinces to deal with it because they are not tied down by the British North America Act. The British North America Act defines what members each province shall have, and we are pretty well limited.

Mr. GREEN: Surely there is no harm in discussing it.

The CHAIRMAN: As chairman, I am quite prepared to rule now that it is in order to have a discussion at the next meeting or a meeting after that, whenever the committee wants to have a full and frank discussion on the problem.

Mr. MACNICOL: I am not going to oppose that but I would say that we should finish the terms of reference first, discuss everything as to how the soldiers should vote, and then we might consider it in discussion afterwards.