

We are now extending the franchise to our women, and amongst them the English language is not so well known as among the men, but those women will be anxious to read the proclamations of the Government for their guidance at election times, and they appreciate the French language just as much as the people of Quebec. Therefore I would ask the Acting Solicitor General to so amend this section as to leave to the discretion of the returning officer in any French district in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, as well as in Manitoba and Quebec, the issuance of proclamations in the French language. We may as well admit at once the equality of the English and French languages, and not be guided merely by regard for dollars and cents, as was so cleverly said this afternoon by the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Stein). I hope my appeal will be responded to by the Acting Solicitor General.

Mr. PROULX: The same argument would apply to certain parts of the province of Ontario where in some counties a majority of the electors speak the French language. If this provision is to be extended beyond Quebec and Manitoba, I would endorse the suggestion of my hon. friend from Gloucester (Mr. Turgeon) that the returning officer be empowered in his discretion to issue proclamations in both languages. Probably the best procedure would be to leave the matter to the discretion of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. LEGER: I approve very heartily of what my hon. friend from Gloucester (Mr. Turgeon) has said as to having these proclamations issued in French. I know many counties in the province of New Brunswick where the population are mostly French-speaking, and in some of the parishes in my constituency all the people are French-speaking. Therefore I think it will be only right and just for the Government to allow the proclamations to be issued in French as well as in English in the provinces referred to.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Before we pass away from clerical errors, there is another error in line 2, where the word "by" should be "issue" with the comma after "shall" stricken out. Also before the word "indicate" in line thirty should be inserted "and such proclamations shall." That would make the section read as follows:

Within two days after the receipt of the writ of election the returning officer shall issue a proclamation in form L under his hand in

the English and French languages in every electoral district in the Provinces of Quebec and Manitoba, and in the English language only in other electoral districts, and shall mail one copy at least to the various postmasters of the post offices within his electoral district, and such proclamation shall indicate—

And so on.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: Does this clause differ from that in the original Act?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Not in regard to the language question.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: In the province of Nova Scotia it has been the practice of the returning officer to post up the proclamation, and his fees are charged in the election expenses.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I think this is a little more elaborate. The postmaster is bound to post up these proclamations under subsection 5.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: Does that relieve the returning officer from responsibility in regard to posting notices?

Mr. GUTHRIE: No. He shall issue a proclamation and shall mail one copy at least to the various postmasters of the post offices within his electoral district, and such proclamation shall indicate the place and time fixed for the nomination of candidates, the day on which the poll for taking the votes of the electors is to be held, and the time when and the place where the returning officer will add up the number of votes given to the several candidates. The returning officer shall at the same time notify in writing each postmaster of the provisions of subsection (5) of this section. Subsection (5) provides that:

Every postmaster shall, forthwith after receipt of such proclamation, post it up in some conspicuous place within his office to which the public has access and maintain it posted there until the time fixed for nomination of candidates has passed, and failure to do so shall be ground for his dismissal from office. For the purposes of this provision such postmaster shall be deemed an election officer and liable as such.

I think this provides a pretty wide publicity for the proclamations.

Mr. FIELDING: It confines the posting to the post offices themselves. The practice hitherto has been for the returning officer to post the proclamations in prominent places.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I think this has been the law for some time.