

sary action as he could. The result was that if I heard nothing more about it I assumed an arrangement had been made between the parties on the spot. If I did hear more about it, then further action was always taken. That was the only possible course of action which could be taken.

Mr. BOTHWELL: I thought when we were amending the Act we could rectify that situation in connection with the placing of polling places. So far as that particular instance is concerned, there was no remedy there.

The WITNESS: I would very much like to look at the file, because I am sure that everything was done that could be done.

*By Mr. Kennedy:*

Q. Would not the straightening out of difficulties of this kind be a good job for a provincial deputy?—A. Practically the work has to be done by telegraph anyway, and it is just as easy to telegraph from Calgary to Ottawa as from Calgary to Edmonton. If I were Chief Electoral Officer I would much rather take the responsibility of whatever action was taken myself than refer it to somebody else who could not get much nearer to the spot than I could.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. There will invariably be an appeal anyway.—A. You could not finally take responsibility for 30,000 polling divisions in Canada.

Q. Under your system the deputy returning officer would be the representative of the Chief Electoral Officer?—A. Yes.

Q. The difficulty to which Mr. Bothwell refers could not happen in our country. The polls are at or near a certain fixed place.—A. Yes. As a matter of fact, I have always had a feeling in regard to that, and I have always thought there was an advantage in these permanent lists. I have always had a normal lot of difficulties with the location of polling stations and the delimitation of the boundaries of polling divisions, particularly in the west.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. That is not true in other parts— —A. Not in the older parts of Ontario, but a good many returning officers rearrange the polling division boundaries.

Q. Have they the power to do that?—A. They must be given the power to do that. The great advantage of a permanent list maintained in an office here would be to prevent geographical delimitation of the polling divisions which is improperly done in every province in Canada. There is very little attention paid to that. A great many of the polling divisions are delimited by the exercise of the franchise, but sometimes you find that provincial polling divisions are delimited for some provincial or municipal franchise and contain either a normal or a large number of manhood suffrage votes. It is ridiculous in some places to depend on the manhood suffrage vote. We have had polling divisions where there were two or three hundred people on a local list, by reference to which the polling division was delimited, and we have found ten or twenty manhood suffrage voters in it, because perhaps it was down town in some large city, among a number of large office buildings and the only voters were the caretakers of them.

*By Mr. McPherson:*

Q. Would we be up against this trouble with polling divisions in the rural districts in the west, where they are very often fixed by reason of their natural situation, or the geographical contour of the country? It may look ridiculous to be the way it is, but it is all right.—A. I have had cases where the returning officers did delimit them in a more or less ridiculous way, creating a long poll-