

the chief electoral officer is not represented on the floor of this house so that he might defend his actions.

At my request the chief electoral officer went to my constituency and held an investigation, after which he came to the conclusion that this man should be dismissed, and he was dismissed. Complaints had been made by the hon. member for Quebec-Montmorency (Mr. Dorion); the electoral officer held an investigation under oath, and came to the conclusion that this man should be dismissed. I submitted the evidence to a learned counsel in Montreal, Mr. John G. Ahern, who came to the conclusion that the returning officer had carried out his duties, but of course as between these two gentlemen the chief electoral officer carried the day and this man was dismissed. Mr. Verge is the son of the former registrar of Bonaventure county, who was returning officer himself for over twenty years. This younger Mr. Verge was practically brought up in the work, and he was most competent. On the day of the general election he received a telephone message at Carleton to come down to Paspebiac a large parish in the county, to see that no obstruction was put in the way of people voting. He visited a couple of polls and reported that everything was satisfactory. On his way home he was told that some objections had been made at the poll called Thivierge, in Bonaventure county, to the effect that three or four young people who had been away from home but who had returned were unable to vote. The deputy returning officer, who has since died, was of the opinion that to vote in a federal election the person named must be on the list. That is the procedure followed in provincial elections in Quebec; if your name is not on the list you cannot vote, but in the federal election there is a means provided, if your name is not on the list, by which you can vote if you take the oath and so on. Mr. Verge seems to have explained the law to the deputy returning officer and to have left the matter at that, according to his declaration. After his departure three young men and two young women who were employed in Montreal and Quebec but who had returned to their homes in Bonaventure for a vacation, voted at that poll. For that reason the chief electoral officer dismissed Mr. Verge.

I do not imagine that Mr. Verge's reputation in the constituency will be very much affected, because unfortunately it is looked upon merely as a political dismissal; everyone is satisfied that he fulfilled his duties, but in justice to Mr. Verge I am making these

(Mr. Marcil.)

remarks, without passing any reflection at all upon the chief electoral officer who is not here to defend himself. Mr. Verge fulfilled his duties to the best of his ability; his actions have been supported by a learned king's counsel of Montreal who is very familiar with the law, and his dismissal is looked upon merely as a political matter in the county. I desire to make this statement in fairness to Mr. Verge.

Mr. CAHAN: My hon. friend's statement now is a matter of record in Hansard. If the hon. gentleman thinks that the chief electoral officer did not act in accordance with his duties, there is always a remedy open, because such a matter is within the jurisdiction of the committee on privileges and elections. If hon. members wish to complain about this parliamentary officer, they will have a full opportunity before that committee. The chief electoral officer could attend for examination.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I suppose the minister has not any idea of how many changes there have been in the returning officers.

Mr. CAHAN: I have not the slightest idea.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): We shall ask the question at a later time.

Mr. CAHAN: If the question is asked in the house I shall see that an answer is given, by return.

Item agreed to.

Patent record, \$35,000.

Mr. CAHAN: The patent record is published by the patent branch of the Department of the Secretary of State. By international agreement we are obliged to publish such a record, and by giving information with respect to patents granted by the Canadian office the record serves a very useful purpose. I am endeavouring if possible, to cut down the cost, and during the ensuing year shall endeavour to reduce the expenditure from \$42,000 to \$35,000.

Mr. BROWN: What is the revenue from that publication?

Mr. CAHAN: I will say to the hon. member that there is some revenue, but it does not cover the cost. Unfortunately with respect to all branches of the Department of Secretary of State revenue does not come to the department, but goes into the consolidated revenue fund. So that while in several