

I do not think anyone could have any objection to that clause remaining. The second clause, in regard to the residence in Canada, I think may well be stricken out, and I think the third clause might be struck out as well.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): This is still an affidavit?

Mr. GUTHRIE: It is the affidavit in the bill that I am discussing. I would not hesitate to strike out the fourth clause also. I also assume, however, that it is the earnest wish of everyone in the house that we should have a fair, clean election and abolish as far as possible personation which has become very prevalent in certain parts of Canada. For the purpose of doing so I submit that we should have some means of identifying the man who attempts personation or who actually personates someone else on election day. I am inclined to think we should all agree to the last clause. This will make an oath of two clauses, as follows:

(1) That I am a British subject of the full age of twenty-one years;

(2) That the signature which I have made to this deposition is in my usual handwriting, and is my true name.

"Signature" includes a mark, and anyone who cannot sign his name makes his mark, whether on a cheque, a contract or an affidavit. The only other suggestion is a technical one. At the bottom of the affidavit appear the words "justice of the peace." I would put there, "deputy returning officer or justice of the peace." If these two clauses are accepted I would withdraw paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, and just leave the one "I am a British subject of the full age of twenty-one years," and the other "I have signed this document and that is my handwriting." It was suggested yesterday that the effect might be to choke the poll if these affidavits were taken. I have ascertained that the number of parties sworn runs from only ten to twenty in any polling booth. The chief electoral officer seemed to think it would involve a great deal of printing as there are 35,000 polls and he would have to get out from ten to twenty affidavits for each poll. Well, that can be done. The oath is not a long one; it is a very short one, and it can be printed very readily, and if twenty or even fifty have to be supplied to each poll it would not clog up the poll because there cannot be more than three hundred names on the polling list for any division. I suggest that this is a simple way of remedying what has become a disgrace in some parts of Canada. In Ontario we call it plugging and personation, in Quebec they call it telegraphing. I know that it is the desire of all parties in this house

to stop that if we can do so, and this requirement that a person may be sworn and leave his signature for identification purposes will I think go a long way in stopping this thing happening.

Mr. GARDINER: I am rather surprised and regret very much the attitude the minister has taken in regard to this oath. He states he is willing to accept clauses 1 and 5, and delete clauses 2, 3 and 4. Clause 1 simply states "I am a British subject of the full age of twenty-one years." That in my judgment is very important to have in the oath. The last clause, No. 5, which the minister wishes to have included in the oath, states "That the signature which I have made to this deposition is in my usual handwriting and is my true name." That is very important too and should remain in the oath. But now let us look at clause 2 for a moment. It reads:

That I have been ordinarily resident in Canada for at least twelve months immediately preceding the commencement of the annual revision of the lists of electors on the fifteenth day of May last.

Why should not that remain in?

Mr. GUTHRIE: The reason is that that is a part of the franchise act, and this is the elections act that we are dealing with. These clauses that I have agreed to strike out deal with matters that have all been considered before the name was put on the voters' list.

Mr. GARDINER: If the situation is covered in that way I have not the same objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE: It is.

Mr. LAPOINTE: I am sorry I cannot agree with this requirement which forces any elector who is challenged at the poll by a representative of a candidate to sign an affidavit in the way prescribed by this section. Where is that done anywhere else? As I said last night, instead of putting obstacles in the way of electors coming to the poll and registering their votes, we should facilitate their voting. In some countries they have a system of compulsory voting. It is a disgrace that citizens do not take the trouble to go to the polls and register their votes, and we should do what we can to facilitate their voting, rather than put obstacles in their way.

The Minister of Justice says that twenty such forms on the average will be required for each poll. But what is there to prevent a representative who wants to make trouble, and unfortunately there are some even in our country, from insisting on challenging the