

Bill. For each electoral division there is to be one registrar who will travel, and will sit as a court of revision at places previously advertised, and at set times. He will conduct all the processes of adding, amending and striking off of names.

Part IV provides for appeals to a judge from an enumerator in a rural district and a registrar in an urban district.

Part V deals with offences and penalties, and Part VI has to do with a variety of matters, such as printing of lists, fees and expenses of officers, franking of franchise materials, the report to Parliament and the time when the Act shall come into force.

This review covers only the Franchise Bill.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: Does this Bill deal with the troublesome question that I hear has been discussed, as to making it compulsory for the applicant for registration to affix his signature?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I think that requirement has been eliminated.

Right Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: I thought it had been amended, but not eliminated.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I am sorry I cannot answer the question. I thought that this House would not be interested in more than an outline of the main scheme, since elections have not the same interest as they used to have for honourable members. We should like to be acquainted with the principal features, of course, as with those of any other measure that we are asked to pass.

While I am on my feet, perhaps I may explain the Dominion Elections Bill.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Which is not before us now.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No. But what I have to say about it will facilitate the understanding of the Franchise Bill. The Elections Bill, as I have already intimated, is the re-enactment, with changes, of that portion of the old Dominion Elections Act not covered by the Franchise Bill. That is the portion having to do with the holding of elections and the making of returns. There are two major changes. The first is the one I mentioned a few moments ago, namely, that in future the appointment of returning officers shall be made by the Governor in Council instead of by the Chief Electoral Officer, or Commissioner, as that official is to be known henceforth. The other change has to do with the holding of advance polls, which from now on are to be open to a wider range of voters, including fishermen, miners, sailors and lumbermen. I have here a concordance showing what happens to every

one of the sections on transfer from the old measure to the present Bill, and I think I can answer any detail within reasonable time.

I feel that a sufficient explanation of both measures has been given to enable honourable members to form a general and accurate idea of the changes made by the other House in the election machinery of our country.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Will the right honourable gentleman explain why it has been deemed advisable to transfer the authority for the appointment of returning officers from the Chief Electoral Officer to the Governor in Council? I may say that when the present law was passed I thought it was fair to the parties contending for election, because it removed the appointments from the political field and placed them in the hands of a permanent official, whose duty it would be to select men of perhaps greater independence than would be possessed by appointees of the Governor in Council. The habit in former times had been for the Government to appoint its own friends, but I think that the Chief Electoral Officer was given authority to select returning officers from among adherents to either party. I do not know whether the present law has worked out to the satisfaction of the candidates in the various ridings, but it contains an element of fairness which I consider commendable.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I had to do with the passing of that law, and I, too, thought it was commendable. I make no pretence of repeating what was said in the other House, for I do not know what happened there, but to my knowledge there has been no press comment in strong opposition to this feature. My own view is that no opposition has been expressed. The Chief Electoral Officer necessarily resides in Ottawa. He knows nothing at all about the constituencies of Yale, or Cariboo, or Cape Breton, for example. While he is not subject to the interest of candidates, a great variety of influences are brought to bear on him and he is not in a position to measure the value of any of them. He is unaware whether any recommendations made to him have an honest origin, and he usually acts without determining this point. Indeed it would take him an impossible time to make such decision with respect to the 245 constituencies. That is my criticism of the present law. And, as I believe that no party has opposed the change, I think it is probably a wise one. I ran in several elections in the days when returning officers were appointed by the Governor in Council, and I got not a bit more advantage when the nominations for these appointments were made by a Gov-