

(3) Citizens in hospitals and ill at home should not lose their franchise and I would seriously recommend a travelling DRO and clerk for each riding or group of ridings to carry out this function.

(4) The armed services mailing list should be made available to all political parties or to none. The CCF and Conservatives have as much right to this list as the Liberals. The armed services of Canada are employed by the Canadian People not the Liberal Party.

(5) More efficient instruction of returning officers so they in turn can intelligently instruct their enumerators. The recent election was poorly enumerated.

(6) The Chief Electoral Officer should be instructed to place "ads" in newspapers explaining how citizens should mark their ballots so they will not be spoiled. Far too many Canadians lose their vote because of last minute instructions, excitement and confusion.

(7) If a resident is left off the Voters' List through error or carelessness and positive proof is available of the persons residence, a sworn oath or statement should be acceptable.

The Election Act should be elastic enough to permit as many Canadians as possible to exercise their franchise and participate in the democratic process. This should be the main objective in any review of the Act.

Maurice C. Punshon,
Scarlet Park, Lake Couchiching.

(Editorial in *The Telegram*—September 14, 1953.)

FEDERAL VOTING PROVISIONS SHOULD BE MORE ELASTIC

There is widespread opinion that the Election Act of Canada would be the better for amendment along various lines. Some of these are listed in a letter to *The Telegram* from Maurice C. Punshon, CCF candidate in Greenwood in the recent election. His proposal that advance poll privileges should be extended beyond the few categories now covered was made in these columns when the Prime Minister announced August voting, and should be acted upon before another election. It is to be hoped, however, that summer polling will never again be imposed by any Canadian government.

Mr. Punshon presents the case of vacationers and of persons unable through illness to vote under present conditions. Some states of the Union extend advance poll privileges to persons on vacation. New York state provides only for those away unavoidably and on business. In Australia, where compulsory voting has been in effect for 28 years, an elector may vote at any poll within his own state, for a candidate in his home constituency, and if a shut-in he may vote by mail. There is a fine of about \$4.50 for failure to vote, and the result has been a poll of about 90 per cent, ever since the system became operative.

Arising probably from an incident at an RCAF station in Ontario, Mr. Punshon contends that the armed services mailing list should be made available to all parties or none. The armed services, he points out, "are employed by the Canadian people, not the Liberal party." He sees a need for better instruction of returning officers. These for some years have been permanent appointments, tending to a sound knowledge of the rules, and the Chief Election Officer, J. N. Castonguay, has been indefatigable in their promulgation to all concerned, but there has been evidence even here of room for improvement.

The statute should be directed to encouragement of the greatest possible use of the franchise by Canadian electors, and revision to that end should be on the agenda for next session of Parliament.