

Mr. HOWARD: I wonder whether that might not be the easiest thing, to go through them, instead of jumping all over the place.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: If that is agreeable, we shall direct our attention to a letter from Mr. Charlebois, who is suggesting an amendment dealing with an improvement in polling facilities.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): What type of improvement?

The CHAIRMAN: You might indicate, Mr. Castonguay, just what suggestion Mr. Charlebois did have.

Mr. CASTONGUAY: Mr. Chairman, it is more along the lines of more suitable premises for polling stations. With election officers, suitable premises are what really are available. Before 1940 returning officers did not seem to have too much difficulty in finding premises in private dwellings for polling stations. But since the end of the last war this has been an increasing problem, so much so that in many cases we have not been able to find suitable premises and we have had to centralize polling stations into schools, community centres—public buildings.

It has been the experience of some returning officers that when finding suitable premises, even private garages are now put at their disposal; so it is a matter of availability and what is at their disposal.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): In your instructions to your returning officers, you do tell them to get the best places that they possibly can?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: That is in the instructions.

Mr. BELL (*Carleton*): So, surely, this is a local problem?

Mr. AIKEN: I was going to ask: this is really a problem for the returning officer, to find the best premises he can?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: Yes.

Mr. AIKEN: Along that line, I would like to ask about returning officers, Mr. Castonguay. I notice you have had new returning officers back for instructions previous to the elections. How long has this procedure been carried out? Has it always been the case?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: Oh, yes. That procedure was initiated by the first chief electoral officer and continued by my immediate predecessor. It is almost impossible to hold an election within sixty days without this work being done.

Mr. AIKEN: Are any of the old, previously appointed returning officers called in for instruction as well?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: It has been my policy to bring in returning officers and give them a three-day course of instruction. If time permits, I travel throughout the country and draw them into a central place in each province and give them a course of instruction: old and new, if time permits.

Mr. AIKEN: So that all returning officers at various intervals receive verbal instructions about all these matters?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: At the last election only twenty did not receive my instructions, because time did not permit it. We had a course lined up for the week the election was held.

Mr. AIKEN: Can you tell me approximately how many new returning officers there were, just prior to the last election?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: I think, roughly, around sixty.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions with regard to letter No. 1?