

## REPORT TO THE HOUSE

FRIDAY, April 28, 1944.

The Special Committee on The Dominion Elections Act, 1938, begs leave to present the following as a

## THIRD AND FINAL REPORT

Under the Order of Reference dated February 1, 1944, your Committee was empowered,—

to consider The Dominion Elections Act, 1938, together with any existing regulations relating to the taking of the vote of the members of the active services of Canada with a view to preserving, continuing and safeguarding the full right of franchise of the personnel of the armed services serving at home and abroad and establishing the required procedure for exercising same; to survey all aspects of the problem, to suggest such amendments, modification or regulations as may be deemed necessary to accomplish the above named purposes.

The Committee has held eleven meetings, has heard several witnesses, including representatives of the Navy, the Army and the Air Force, and all suggestions made by the witnesses have been carefully considered.

Study has been made of the various methods employed in the past by Canada and by provincial legislatures for the taking of the votes of members of the armed services, while the systems used for that purpose in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa have also been scrutinized.

Consideration has been given to a suggestion that the votes of members of the armed services be taken by proxy, the person so appointed as proxy to be either the next of kin of the elector, or some other person nominated by such elector. Your Committee believes that, except in the case of prisoners of war—for whose voting recommendations are made later in this report—direct voting would be much more satisfactory to the vast majority of the members of the armed services.

A suggestion was received that each war service elector cast his vote by writing on the ballot paper either the name of the political party of his choice, or the name of a candidate who has been officially nominated in the electoral district in which the elector is entitled to vote. Your Committee recommends that the more practicable method is to have the elector vote for a candidate rather than for a party.

It is recommended that the procedure to be followed in the taking, receiving, sorting and counting of the votes cast by war service electors, stationed within and without Canada, at a general election held during the present war and within a period of six months thereafter, be as set forth in paragraphs one to sixty-five of the proposed "Canadian War Service Voting Regulations, 1944" hereto attached as Schedule A.

It is further recommended that the special returning officers for the overseas voting territories be appointed at least two months before the issue of the writs ordering a general election. Your Committee is informed that, if this is done, there will be no need to extend the period between the issue of the writs and polling day, which is usually sixty days.