

1917 cost \$1,678,139.99, of which \$251,613.09 was paid for military and naval presiding officers, special returning officers, scrutineers in Canada, Bermuda, the United States, England, France, and elsewhere. In other words, that was the total amount which went to the taking of the vote outside of this country. The cost in Canada alone came to \$1,426,526, of which the cost for returning officers and enumerators was \$1,204,207. So that practically the whole of this large amount consisted in paying officers and enumerators. In the last provincial election in Ontario the lists were prepared for the first time under the enumerating system and that election cost the province nearly a million and a half dollars.

Now, the Act as my hon. friend permitted it to be amended in committee provides, so far as Ontario is concerned, that we shall use the provincial lists in so far as they may be prepared at the time of a general election in this country. If an election comes within the next year or two we shall use the lists used in the last provincial election. After that time we would take the lists prepared under the Ontario Act, which provides that the lists must be made up by the assessors in the municipalities, revised by the Courts of Revision, and then printed in a form that is available to every one. These will be the lists that will be made the basis for federal elections. What we say is that those lists in that completed form, prepared by officers who are not appointees of the Government, not creatures of the administration, but the assessors chosen by the municipalities themselves, and revised, not by creatures of the Administration but by judges, officers recognized by the Crown and by the Government as independent—we say that where those lists are completed in that fashion, it is wholly superfluous to appoint an army of enumerators simply to add a name to them or strike off one as the case may be. We say that this is entirely superfluous especially when we know that if any man's name is not on the list after these registrars have gone over it he may nevertheless have his vote by being sworn on election day. We believe that if the Government will accept this amendment it will save the country a considerable part of a million dollars if we are to judge by the figures of previous elections already quoted. It will effect an enormous saving in the provinces in which there are voters' lists available, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario particularly, and will add considerably to the confidence the electors

have in the lists. What is necessary in a franchise act is that as far as possible it should be above question; it should be effective; it should be economical and satisfactory in administration; it should satisfy the public conscience; it should secure that acquiescence in a verdict which should be the last word on all questions submitted to the people and it should appeal to the sense of right and justice, honesty and fair play. The sanctity of the franchise is a fundamental principle of the institutions of a free people. If we can do anything to give greater confidence and security to the electorate and save the country a large sum of money at this time when the public debt is gigantic and the annual expenditures enormous we will be doing something which ought to be regarded as a public duty by every member of this House.

With regard to this amendment, let me say that I have taken verbatim et literatim the very suggestion made by the minister in charge of this Bill when it was before the committee on May 17. Hon. members will remember that there was a conference between members on both sides of the House to see if in some way or other economies might not be effected in the matter of administration. That conference took place in the minister's office, members from both sides of the House were present and they were absolutely at one as to the wisdom of adopting this precise amendment. There were other amendments which might have afforded reason for difference but when this amendment was introduced in the House some difference arose over lack of appreciation of its real purpose which was to effect economy and to provide security and the suggestion of the conference was thrown overboard. I have drawn this amendment in the language of the minister himself and I propose to move it in the hope that the House will at this time give its assent to it. I therefore move:

That the Bill be not now read a third time, but be recommitted to a Committee of the Whole House, with instructions to amend it, by inserting the following words at the beginning of Rule 1 of Schedule B to Section 32 of said Bill:

"No rural registrar shall be appointed in any electoral district in any province where provincial voters' lists are available for the purpose of a Dominion election under the provisions of subsection one of section 32 of this Act. In such cases provincial voters lists shall be adopted as final and complete for rural polling divisions: subject, however, to the right of any person to apply to have his name added