

But if the committee were anxious to have detailed information as to the workings of these systems, it would require—in my view—somebody to make a study of the permanent lists, say in some of the states of the United States where they have permanent lists. This would include a study of the situation in England also, and maybe Australia, where they have compulsory registration and compulsory voting. They have had that for many, many years, and I would imagine that, from the mechanical side, they would have that down pat by now. I can only give you information, even next year, of the general principles involved in the permanent lists, not the working details.

Mr. CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a suggestion about a different subject, for Mr. Castonguay's consideration; that is, the better delineation of polling sections and directions to the booths in a riding like St. John's, which is an urban riding but which extends out into the country and becomes rural. There was considerable difficulty there. I went down to the headquarters, and there were a lot of people trying to locate where the geographical boundaries of certain polling sections were. It was so vague that hardly anyone could be sure about it.

I searched around, and it took me about two hours to discover the booth. There should be more conspicuous markings and more conspicuous directions, so that people do not have to search around to discover the polling booth.

Mr. CASTONGUAY: In so far as the descriptions of the polling booths are concerned, I ordered a general revision of all polling divisions in Canada in 1956 and 1957. Also, instructions were given to the returning officers that they were to give a list of the descriptions of the polling divisions they established to all recognized political organizations in their electoral districts, and they were to entertain any recommendation or suggestion to improve these descriptions.

That is the procedure we have adopted now, and it has been fairly satisfactory. In so far as giving directions to the electors as to where the polling booth is located is concerned, that could be improved a great deal by the returning officer, who has full freedom to do it.

Mr. CARTER: I am not complaining that they did not do all you asked them to do, but even with that, the description was still not very sharp; you hardly knew whether you were in this section or whether you belonged to the adjoining one, and when you came to look for the place in which to vote, it was in a little inconspicuous house some distance off the road. You would pass it 100 times without noticing the sign that there was a polling booth there.

I think it certainly should be out near the road, where people driving around in a car would see it. You do not look a quarter of a mile away from the road, looking for the sign to a booth. It was there; but it was hard to find.

Mr. CASTONGUAY: I could send a copy of the minutes of the evidence of this committee meeting to the returning officer, and he could improve that at the next election, I am sure, with your recommendations.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I would like to return to this question of a permanent list, and I would like to ask Mr. Castonguay if he has ever made an estimate of how much the electoral period could be reduced if there were a permanent list. I must say, I do not think there is anything terribly wrong with the present system of enumerating in itself; but the thing that has always bothered me about it is that the total election campaign has to be so long.

Mr. CASTONGUAY: In 1934, the Franchise Act permitted the holding of elections in 30 days from the date of the issue of the writ, but the period from