

such as sickness, conscientious scruples, absence from the district, etc. At every election in Canada there would be hundreds of electors with sound reasons for not having voted at a particular election. It would not be right to disfranchise them. How is it practicable to legislate so that all such men should retain the franchise while the corrupt men who fail to vote shall lose the franchise? The solution the Committee suggested, providing that those not voting at the election could have their names retained on the list on satisfying a judge that they had a fair excuse for abstention, would not meet the difficulty. It would be rather oppressive to require that such a voter should go to the expense and trouble of travelling—in some instances many miles—before he could appear before a judge and again enjoy the franchise of which he was deprived through no fault of his own. Moreover such a provision would really not materially reduce the list of voters who are bought “not to vote.” There would be many opportunities for evasion under such a provision, and a voter who was unscrupulous enough to be bribed and wanted to keep his vote “in the market” could easily discover that he came under one of the exemptions and did not vote because he was “sick,” or his wife was sick or his children were sick, or he was absent from home on “business” or some equally ingenious excuse which could not be easily controverted and which, therefore, might enable him to retain his vote. What would be done in the case of man who might truthfully declare that he had conscientious objections to voting for any of the candidates nominated? But apart altogether from the difficulty of framing a workable provision protecting the honest absentee and punishing the corrupt one, there is another view as to the uselessness of adopting “compulsory voting” which, although I have never heard it expressed, must occur to any one who reflects upon the practical operation of such a measure. The advocates of the measure contend that its adoption would prevent that form of bribery by which a man is paid to stay away from the polls on election day. Now that is all it could accomplish even if effectively enforced. But that form of bribery is tried to a comparatively trifling extent in Canada, and if the proposed law were enacted and the elector did not have a sudden