

Mr. HALBERT: As the Farmer's party has been mentioned, I want to tell the hon. member (Mr. Sexsmith) that he is absolutely astray.

Mr. SEXSMITH: In what way?

Mr. HALBERT: We do not go from door to door begging subscriptions.

Mr. SEXSMITH: I beg your pardon; they did that in my own riding.

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion with regard to subscriptions to campaign funds does not properly come under the clause that we are now considering. The matter is covered by clause 10 of the Bill. I will allow the hon. member (Mr. Halbert) to continue his remarks because I presume the remarks of the hon. member for East Peterborough (Mr. Sexsmith) call for a reply.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I may inform the committee that two hon. members asked me, before the Easter recess, not to consider clause 10 again until they returned from the West. I promised that we would not consider clause 10 until Tuesday next. I make this statement for the purpose of putting my hon. friend (Mr. Halbert) straight on the point.

Mr. HALBERT: Under those conditions I have nothing more to say at present.

Mr. LEVI THOMSON: Before this clause carries I would like to express my approval of it in its present form. Not that I do not think the clause is open to some criticism, but even worded as it is it would be better left in the Bill than done away with altogether.

I would like to suggest to the Acting Solicitor General again that this possibly might be one of the best opportunities to consider the question raised by the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster) in regard to compulsory voting. If you provide for compulsory voting you remove the possibility altogether of any worry on this question. In other words, if you compel people to come out to vote, you do away with the necessity of hiring teams at elections and people will go to the polls to cast their ballots. The extent to which a great many people insist upon being carried to the polls is simply disgraceful. Without entering into a discussion of clause 10, it means a very great addition to the expense of running an election, an exceedingly costly thing as it is, even for legitimate campaign purposes. There is no use in any one telling us you ought to run an election

[Mr. Sexsmith.]

without incurring any expense; you simply cannot do it, at least not in our country where we have to hire halls and pay from \$20 to \$50 for that purpose. It is absurd to talk of such a thing. But if we compel people to go and vote—unless there is some reasonable excuse for their not doing so—then we do away with a great many of the evils that we have to contend with during an election campaign. In my opinion the Government should consider very seriously the question of compelling people to vote. If I am correct in my recollection the Minister of Justice (Mr. Doherty) approved of that principle at one time when the subject was up for discussion in the House. I was sorry that my hon. friend did not adhere more tenaciously to his attitude on that occasion, although there is no doubt opposition was offered by the leaders on both sides of the House. Nevertheless, I believe my right hon. friend was right in his view. I hope he is still of the same mind and that he will endeavour to bring his colleagues around to his point of view. If I remember correctly the Minister of Justice offered a very reasonable solution of this difficulty at the time I speak of, and I regretted seeing him yield to the judgment of others on the point. I hope, however, he will stick to his guns this time and insist that before the Bill goes through a provision shall be added to make voting compulsory in all reasonable cases.

Mr. MOWAT: With respect to the question of compulsory voting—

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. gentleman and the members of the committee generally to refrain from discussing compulsory voting on this clause. I really cannot see that compulsory voting is at all relevant to the clause under discussion.

Section allowed to stand.

On section 13—payment of expenses, wages, etc., of electors forbidden.

Mr. MCKENZIE: In reference to a voter "going to or returning from the neighbourhood" of the poll, I would like the minister, if he can, to define what is meant by "the neighbourhood thereof". If you summon a man before a magistrate it may be a very difficult thing to prove what is meant by that language.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I do not think we should define the language; to my mind it has a clear enough meaning. It has been the law for many years and has never given any trouble that I have ever heard