

revising officer that I do not intend availing myself of my right of voting; but how will that work practically? Will it be an easy thing to work this section into practice? The lists of voters being only revised every two, three or even four years, how will I know, such a long time beforehand, whether my reasons for not voting will still exist when an election occurs? It might happen, on the contrary; that I might have good reasons for leading me to vote, and should my name not be on the lists of voters, I would be unable to vote. These are matters that cannot be controlled, for after all a gentleman who shall have availed himself of this section at the time of revising the lists might regret it and wish to exercise his right of voting two or three years after the revision being made. For these reasons, I think the practical working of this Bill will be very difficult, if not an utter impossibility. I understand that the object the hon. gentleman had in view, as well as the hon. gentleman who, a moment ago, moved for leave to introduce a Bill of the same kind, is to prevent, as far as possible, corruption during elections. Every gentleman who had to go through electoral contests knows that it costs something, that it costs more or less, but I say that should both of the candidates be willing to come to an understanding, it would be a very easy thing not to spend a cent during elections. Should both candidates be willing not to go through a canvassing tour in the county, to simply go through a speech-making tour, things would be very different from what they are now. It is what I once proposed to my opponent. I said to him: If I am more popular than you, I shall evidently be returned; if, on the contrary, you are the more popular man, well, you shall be returned. It is the true way to prevent electoral corruption; let candidates hold as many meetings as they like, let them discuss before the electors the great and little matters which are likely to interest them, it is all very well, but at any cost prevent canvassing. It is not through public meetings that corrupt practices go on; it is through canvassing from door to door that weak voters are tempted. Should there exist a law stating that canvassing shall be deemed a corrupt practice, I think a great many things would thus be prevented which we very properly so much complain of now. So-called committees are not necessary no more than canvassing. There will always be a sufficient number of free and right-minded voters who will go to the polls without any recourse to such means. A law stating that canvassing is prohibited under penalty of having the election declared null and void, would be a good deal more productive of good results than all these Bills that are now introduced here, with good intents I confess, but which can have no practical results. It is also stated, Mr. Speaker, that electors are unwilling to record their votes, that they must be given money to be led to exercising their right. I say that things are all the

other way—the elector likes to record his vote. He will, at all events, go to the polls without being called upon by a visitor willing to solicit and canvass him. Should we prevent canvassing, there would be no necessity for the making of laws to compel the electors to vote, at all events. The few who, during a contest would not vote because there was no canvassing, would be the first, at the next election to go to the polls. Why? Because they would know they could expect no money nor carriages. I repeat that not one of those electors would fail to go and vote at the next election. What do we now see? The polling stations are opened at nine o'clock in the morning, and there are hardly three or four electors ready to record their votes. Whose fault is it? I say it is the candidates' fault. If the elector remains at home, it is because he was told by the candidate or his canvassing agent: "There will be carriages to take you to the polling station, provisions given out to you—in a word, you will be treated like a gentleman." Is it then to be surprised at that the elector stays at home, waiting some one to come and take him. Generally it costs more to prevent an elector from voting than to have his vote—that I state generally speaking. It was also stated by the hon. member for Bellechasse that there are several laws restraining personal freedom, and he quoted, amongst others, the law of registration. I differ with the hon. gentleman. I cannot see that that law restrains the personal freedom. A person making a transaction on a property through a written agreement cannot find it wrong that that transaction be registered, so that it be made known. And why? The object in view is to make outsiders know the character of the transaction, in order to protect the parties concerned. Allowing a man to interfere with others is not protecting the personal freedom. Should that be allowed, it would be authorizing a thing likely to defraud and ruin interests worthy of protection. I think it would not be a well understood freedom, but rather an excess of liberty, for there ought to be lines drawn between liberty and exorbitant freedom. The license law was also quoted. Here again I am of a wholly different opinion. That law was passed to protect the personal freedom. Should every individual be allowed to sell liquor without a license, and to any one without being liable to be fined, it would be, indeed, a nice existing state of things. You could then see the father of a family spending in taverns his goods and those of his children. Notwithstanding the protective laws we have, that occurs, unhappily, even too often. Should that trade be free, the things we are now witnessing, and which are so much to be regretted, would become a general evil, and the acts we are now disapproving would, through an unchecked excess of liberty, become of a much more objectionable character. Therefore, the license law cannot be instanced as an argument in favour of the passing of this Bill. I am stating my views immediately,

Mr. JEANNOTTE.