

the decision of the sub-committee on the matter. We have just one point which I think we in this committee ought to consider now, and that is the principle. The present Act is based upon a very definite principle, the principle of a permanent list as distinct from anything we have had in the past. The question, I think, that the committee ought to determine is this: Are we as a committee prepared to stand by the principle of a permanent list?

Mr. MacNICOL: No.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Or is it the view of the committee that we should abandon the principle of the permanent list and adopt a new system? If Mr. Stewart's suggestion is accepted—

Mr. FACTOR: Pardon me, you are talking about by-elections?

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I was just going to make that point right now. If Mr. Stewart's suggestion is accepted, while it is true it applies to by-elections, nevertheless it does abandon or depart from the principle of the permanent list. I mean, we might as well face that.

Hon. Mr. STEWART: Only, Mr. Stevens, because we have departed from it this year by the amendment.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I agree.

Hon. Mr. STEWART: That is all; it is only because of that Act.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I do think that we and parliament must come to a decision on that point.

Hon. Mr. STEWART: Certainly.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: It is a definite fundamental principle. I am only stating my own view, but I am inclined to think that a permanent list, a federal list, is a desirable thing. I believe, however, that that is not in accordance with the views of a great many. I am just expressing my own views. If we postulate a permanent list as being a desirable thing, then, in my opinion, we should not depart from it if we can possibly avoid it. I do think that an amendment could be drafted along the line that Colonel Thompson has been discussing, that we provide for by-elections both rural and urban and still maintain the idea of a permanent list. It strikes me that we should take the point first: Are we going to stand by the principle of a permanent list or are we not?

The CHAIRMAN: Would you express some opinion in connection with permanent revision instead of yearly revision of the list, continuous revision?

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: I am not dogmatizing on it, but it is my view that we should stand by the permanent list and have an annual or semi-annual revision. That is my view. I think that by-elections should be held upon the latest revision of that permanent list. That has been done for thirty years in British Columbia. I think Mr. Turgeon has had a good deal of experience with it. I do not know whether he will agree with me, but I think that the system has worked fairly satisfactorily there. Personally I favour that system, with a permanent list, revised, if you like, every six months, but I think every year perhaps would be sufficient; and then your by-election held upon the latest revision of that list, whatever it may be. There may be some injustices, but you are going to find the presence of a certain amount of injustice almost anywhere.

Mr. FACTOR: How would you provide for a by-election that might take place between now and say the 1st of April, 1937?

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: The bill passed the House of Commons, but it has not passed the Senate yet. As far as the law now stands, we should be carrying out a revision this year. That is the law.

Mr. FACTOR: Do you know, if the bill passes and it is law, what will happen if a by-election takes place between now and the 1st of April?

[Col. J. T. C. Thompson.]