

*By the Chairman:*

Q. I take it that your view is that you would have a better chance to get someone to do the work well if the man happened to be a public officer and had certain responsibilities, than if you picked up any man recommended to you by the politicians?—A. That is my idea.

Q. This man, after all, has to keep carrying on his public office year after year; he has certain responsibilities to the public, whereas the man appointed only for the job might do the job very well?—A. Yes.

*By Mr. McPherson:*

Q. Did you find in 1925 or 1926 any real serious trouble in connection with the returning officers?—A. I had a great deal of trouble in two or three constituencies. I have said in my report that it is perfectly astonishing that 240 odd men picked up and taken out of their ordinary jobs for about two months for a political duty showed the measure of probity, intelligence and capacity which they did. That has always been astonishing to me, having regard to the way they were selected and appointed. As a matter of fact, that is always the difficulty when you begin to discuss a vast number of instances. You can always get a sufficient number of exceptions to look imposing. All of the normal cases where the work was done without comment are simply forgotten; attention is directed to the exceptional cases. That was a difficulty I always found in keeping my mind from being affected by the exceptional cases, and keeping the background sweet.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. Would you not say that under any system you would find these exceptional cases?—A. Yes; the only thing you can do is to get a system which will be likely to show as few exceptions as possible.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. With how many general elections have you been connected?—A. Three.

Q. And in that time you have had about 700 returning officers?—A. Yes.

Q. Of all those, with regard to how many would you say you had serious complaint?—A. I cannot say exactly.

Q. What is the percentage?—A. I think I reported about six out of about 600.

*By Mr. Anderson:*

Q. I see in your appendix 2 that out of 1,136 letters which you sent out asking for suggestions and complaints you received only 37 complaints.—A. Yes, and in 1926 I received only four. The difference was due to the fact that in 1921 and 1925 I wrote a personal letter to every candidate and asked him whether he had any complaint to make. In 1921 my report was printed, and I think there were about forty replies to those personal letters making some suggestions; in 1925, there were 36. In 1926, I did not write a personal letter to every candidate; I just let it go on the instructions, because it was suggested in the election instructions which related to candidates, and I only got four letters from all the candidates—the candidate or his election agent.

*By Mr. Kennedy:*

Q. What did you ask for? I never received one of those.—A. In 1925, 1,138 letters were sent to candidates and official agents. This is the letter:

Referring to section 74 of the Dominion Election Act and paragraph 266 of the election instructions, I have the honour to ask if there is any amendment to the Act or any complaint as to the conduct of an

[Mr. O. M. Biggar, K.C.]