

the Liberal candidate. I asked him how they could tell in what way they voted, and the answer was that the ballots were numbered, and after the elections were over these were all traced up and marked in every riding, showing whether the elector had voted Liberal or Conservative. However, it is not my intention here to go into the details of these objections. There are some good points in connection with the present Dominion franchise. The two essential points are those that were brought out by the hon. member for Westmoreland (Mr. Powell) in making his amendment this afternoon. The main point is uniformity of franchise, and another one is the control of the voters' list. Now, if the Solicitor General will kindly give me a little attention I will make a proposition to him. As I said, it is not my intention to make any lengthy criticism of this Bill now, because I can do that in committee; but I will take the opportunity of making a suggestion which will involve all that is good in the proposal to utilize the provincial franchise, and I am satisfied it will reduce the cost to a minimum. At the present time, whether under the provincial franchise or under the Dominion, there is for every polling subdivision a deputy returning officer and a poll clerk. In addition to this, Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that there should be an agent appointed by each candidate. If there are two parties, let there be two agents, if there are three parties let each candidate in the election have an agent, and let each agent have his clerk. These should be officially recognized in the law. I should say also that these men might be paid out of the Dominion funds, although appointed by the candidates. Then I would suggest that a clerk for each of these agents should be appointed, and I would make provision in the law to have him paid by the candidate appointing him, or for that matter these agents and their clerks might both be entitled to the same pay as the deputy returning officer and his clerk, and be paid by the candidates. However, that matter is a mere question of detail. I would have the nominations take place two weeks before the day of the election. The day after the nomination, or at some convenient time soon thereafter, let this board of six persons meet in each polling subdivision and take what they now take for election purposes, the written list of the clerk of the peace as finally revised by the judge. Let the deputy returning officer and each agent take this list and have it written in triplicate, or according as the number of candidates may be. Then let every candidate go over that list, and let every elector whose name is omitted in any way, every young man who has recently become of age, every tenant who has moved in from an adjoining subdivision or an adjoining county, come before this

board, and by taking the oath, show that he is qualified to be placed on that list. We would thus have a very inexpensive mode of preparing a list. People might object to giving judicial functions to this deputy returning officer by empowering him to administer the oath. Why, you do it in your election law to-day. He is permitted to swear the agent on election day, and why should he not be permitted to swear an elector as well to his right to vote? In the present list we find that the work is well done by the county judges, the work is nearly all done on the basis of the assessor, and I am satisfied from experience that these local officials would do it as honestly and as efficiently as if it were done by the judges of the land. Now, Sir, in the present election law of the province of Ontario there are great defects. In the first place, every young man coming to be twenty-one years of age after the revision of that list is disfranchised from voting until his name is entered on the next list. Every clergyman who changes his station is disfranchised if he does not have his name put on the list a year in advance. Every tenant who moves from one municipality to another is disfranchised under the existing law. If a man the day before an election moves out of one polling subdivision and takes his furniture with him, constituting a change of residence, he cannot return and vote on election day. Under the present provincial franchise in the province of Ontario there are very many men, good, worthy citizens, who are debarred from voting. If a comparison were made between the number who are disfranchised under the provincial law of Ontario and those who are disfranchised under this objectionable law of the Dominion of Canada, I venture the assertion that the number will be found greater who are disfranchised under the provincial law than under the Dominion law. There are other arguments that might be advanced; but I do not wish to occupy the time of the House longer, and I will reserve them for the committee stage, when I will present them. I merely wish to submit to the hon. Solicitor General and the Government the suggestion that while retaining all that is good in the present law and taking the provincial lists as a basis, we should retain control of the preparation of the lists, and of the qualification entitling an elector to vote, and above all things we should regulate the control of the ballots, which in Ontario are numbered, so as to have a free ballot at Dominion elections.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Mr. Fitzpatrick). We are not dealing at the present time with the Dominion election law, but with the Franchise Act. The question of the ballot will come up in connection with the Dominion election law.