

By Mr. St. Père:

Q. How do they proceed to get this complete registration?—A. They have offices about the country where the registration takes place.

By Mr. Kellner:

Q. How is the compulsory registration carried out?—A. I am not quite sure how they work the compulsory registration. If a man does not vote he is really fined by the Chief Electoral Officer. The statutory fine is £2, but the actual fine, as I am informed by the Chief Electoral Officer for Australia, is two pounds and six pence.

By Mr. Kennedy:

Q. Is that in the report?—A. No. I never put forward this scheme in concrete form. As a matter of fact, while I was Chief Electoral Officer I reframed all the provisions of the Act so as to have in mind all of the possible alternatives.

By Mr. Totzke:

Q. I understood you to say that you did not think it feasible.—A. That is my view of this Dominion work. There is no possible way in which it could be satisfactory.

The CHAIRMAN: We will leave this matter open for discussion amongst the members of the Committee. What is the next question?

The WITNESS: The next question was the question of the appointment of the returning officers. I can say to the Committee, as it is contained in my report, that it is my experience that if you get a decent, honest returning officer, it makes no difference what his politics are, but what does make a difference—and it makes a difference to both sides of politics—is that it is essential that the returning officer should know his job. The difficulties I always had with returning officers,—aside from some individual circumstances of a special character—were with fellows who were asked to operate a complicated piece of machinery without knowing anything about it and who ran themselves into difficulties all the way along the line, and ran the candidates into difficulties. The more often a returning officer has acted, the better the election is conducted from everybody's point of view. The chief difficulty has been due to the constant change of returning officers.

By Mr. Kennedy:

Q. What has been the cause of that constant change?—A. That is developed in the first appendix to this report. It is simply a short history of the appointment of returning officers since confederation. It is rather short, and I will read it.

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY REVIEW OF THE STATUTORY PROVISIONS AFFECTING FROM TIME TO TIME THE APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF RETURNING OFFICERS

Under the British North America Act, 1867, section 42, the Governor General was empowered to issue a writ for the election of a member of the House of Commons to such returning officer in each electoral district as he thought fit, the person selected to conduct the election in accordance with the electoral law of the province in which lay the electoral district for which he was appointed. Under the first Dominion Elections Act, passed in 1874 (37 Vict. c. 9), the discretion thus given to the