

FARMERS' CREDITORS ACT

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENT

Hon. E. N. RHODES (Minister of Finance) moved the second reading of and concurrence in amendment made by the Senate to Bill No. 114, relating to the application of the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act, 1934, in the province of British Columbia.

He said: The Senate has inserted an amendment bringing the act into force only upon proclamation of the governor in council, and I am quite prepared to accept it. I move concurrence.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): I am in favour of the amendment, but there is an anomaly inasmuch as the bill said that after the first day of July, 1935, the act should cease to be in force.

Motion agreed to; amendment read the second time and concurred in.

DOMINION ELECTIONS ACT, 1934

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of Bill No. 105, to amend the Dominion Elections Act, 1934.

He said: Before the motion is put I wish to explain that in accordance with the announcement made some days ago sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 will be withdrawn, leaving the remaining sections and one or two suggestions that have come recently from the chief electoral officer, which I propose to submit at his request.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Smith (Cumberland) in the chair.

Mr. GUTHRIE: While we are waiting for the reprinted bill, I may explain that the only remaining sections in the new bill as reprinted will be: Section 1 which deals with advance polls and which provides that the advance polls shall be open on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday before polling day until ten o'clock at night on each day.

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is one more day than formerly.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Were there three days formerly?

Mr. LAPOINTE: Two.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Well, this is in accordance with the request of the Trades and Labour Congress and others. The next is a section

to waive the necessity of the chief electoral officer going into the preparation of voters' lists for the by-elections which would not be held until after dissolution.

Mr. GRAY: The date was fixed for the by-elections.

Mr. GUTHRIE: This is to waive the necessity for the preparation of voters' lists for those by-elections. The next change is for the adoption of a new form of oath of the voter at the poll where he is challenged. At present all that is provided for is an oral oath. The new form is one that has to be signed by the man who takes the oath. It is for the purpose of identification and also of proof if proceedings are afterwards taken.

A new section which has been suggested by the chief electoral officer is to amend section 24 of the act passed last session by striking out the first seven words of that section. It provides that:

Immediately after he has granted a poll, the returning officer shall, by writing in form 10 executed under his hand, appoint one deputy returning officer for each polling station.

Complaints have come from the returning officers in some of the constituencies which are more or less remote that sufficient time is not allowed between nomination day and polling day for the purpose of appointing deputy returning officers in all the distant polling subdivisions. It has been suggested by the chief electoral officer that the words "immediately after he has granted a poll" be struck out and the following words substituted:

Immediately after the issue of the writ of election.

So that it will read:

Immediately after the issue of the writ of election the returning officer shall appoint deputy returning officers.

It so happens that in Canada we do not have very many uncontested elections or acclamations.

Mr. McPHEE: That is not in the bill.

Mr. GUTHRIE: That is a suggestion I am making now; it is one that came to me from the chief electoral officer and I see no objection to it. If we had many elections by acclamation, there might be a great deal of expense in appointing returning officers who would have no duties. I think in only one case in the last election was there an acclamation.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Two.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I see no objection to this, and it has been requested to meet the difficulty in some of the larger constituencies that are harder to reach. I would move that as a new section to be section 5 of the reprinted bill.