

meaning of the section preceding. Such sighted assistant shall accompany the blind voter to the polling booth, and mark the ballot paper as directed by such voter. Such sighted assistant may only act for one blind voter in any one election, and before entering the polling booth shall subscribe to the oath following:—

I swear (or affirm) that I am well acquainted with John Doe who is incapacitated by blindness.

That I will faithfully mark his or her ballot paper as directed by the said John Doe.

That I will not divulge the name of any candidate voted for.

That I have not this day assisted any other blind voter.

That places such person in precisely the same position as the Deputy Returning Officer, in respect to secrecy. We say that it removes the possibility of fraud by a person saying that he or she is blind, when in fact they are not blind. Such a condition could exist under the present circumstances. The suggestion, as we make it, is merely a suggestion. May I say, however, that we are extremely anxious that an amendment be made this year to the Dominion Elections Act to let the blind person choose, as suggested under the amendment. Outside of that we would like to receive the consent of Parliament to the amendment of this Act, and in this way it will be much easier to approach the provinces for the amendments to their election acts, and to arrange for amendments to the municipal acts. As I say, there is one amendment in the British Empire in respect to the blind, and I have reference to the one in Australia. I have in my hand what purports to be a section of the Act outlining assistance to certain voters, substituted by No. 17, 1928, section 19. It is a revision of the Election Act of Australia, and is as follows:—

(1) If any voter satisfies the presiding officer that his sight is so impaired or that he is so physically incapacitated that he is unable to vote without assistance, the presiding officer shall permit a person appointed by the voter to enter an unaccompanied compartment of the booth with the voter, and mark, fold, and deposit the voter's ballot-paper for him.

(2) If any voter fails to appoint a person in pursuance of the last preceding subsection, or if any voter satisfies the presiding officer that he is so illiterate that he is unable to vote without assistance, the presiding officer, in the presence of such scrutineers as are present, or, if there be no scrutineers present, then in the presence of (a) the poll clerk; or (b) if the voter so desires, in the presence of a person appointed by such voter, instead of the poll clerk; shall mark, fold, and deposit his ballot-paper for him.

I do not intend to take much more of the time of this Committee. All I can say is this; that a complete study of this question from the point of view of blind persons, and from the point of view of public welfare has been made. It has been examined from stem to stern, and every angle of the question is answered in this brief, or argument I have in my hand. I would beg leave from the Committee to file this typewritten statement, for the consideration and study of the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the wish of the Committee that this brief be printed in the proceedings?

(Suggestion agreed to, and brief entitled "The Political Status of Blind Electors" attached hereto as Appendix "A".)

Mr. LAPIERRE: Would the witness give us an approximation of the number of blind voters?