

convenience and injustice would result from such a provision. I trust that on reflection my hon. friend will agree that the right to vote should be limited to those who have, even for a short period, been resident in Canada.

I would suggest also that my hon. friend amend the Bill to make it absolutely clear that an elector may vote only for one who has been nominated as a candidate.

The form of the ballot is calculated to mislead because it provides that the voter, if he desires to vote for any particular person, may write his name on the blank space. I presume the Act means any particular person who has been nominated as a candidate. I think the ballot paper should declare that he may vote for any particular person or persons who are named as candidates. The plural should be there, because there are some constituencies in Canada wherein more than one candidate may be chosen. In the city and county of St. John two candidates may be elected, and the same applies to the county of Halifax. I think, therefore, the ballot should provide that the voter may vote for "any particular candidate or candidates" instead of "any particular person or persons." The elector, seeing the language on the ballot paper, may presume that he would have the right to select some person whom he might like to vote for but who had not been nominated as a candidate. I think it is desirable to make the provision so clear that no misunderstanding shall arise with respect to it.

Mr. KNOWLES: I wish to ask the minister why it is not his intention to address the House explaining the principle of this Bill. We have our existing legislation, chapter 11 of the statutes of 1915, and the minister sees some points that he wants to improve upon, but instead of simply bringing down an amendment to the Act, he is bringing down a Bill dealing with the matter de novo and repealing the old Act. If the minister had proceeded by the other method, and bring down an amending Bill, he would have explained the principle of his amending Bill and pointed out the reason it was necessary to make these amendments before asking us to consent to the second reading. I submit that we should ask the minister to give us his reasons for this change, and that we should not merely regard it as sufficient for him to refer to the previous legislation. The new points should be dealt with.

[Mr. Pugsley.]

Mr. DOHERTY: On the introduction of the Bill, I went very fully into an explanation of the reasons which led us to believe that the provisions of the legislation of 1915, while they might have been adequate and practicable under the conditions that prevailed at that time, are hardly sufficient to meet the exigencies of the present day. There are two notable changes in the conditions, the first being the very much larger number of voters that have to be dealt with overseas than when the legislation of 1915 was passed. The other outstanding change of conditions results from the difficulty, and no doubt the danger, that surround the transportation between this country and the overseas countries at the present time which did not exist, at all events, in such degree when we were dealing with the legislation of 1915. I do not think there is any substantial difference in principle between the legislation of 1915 and this legislation. There is this marked difference of conditions which in our judgment, at all events, and I submit in the judgment of the House, calls for providing a different procedure in the taking of the soldier's vote. We might have proceeded by calling this an amending Bill, and attaching every change to some particular section as an amendment to it, but that would have been a very inconvenient way of doing it. It is clearer and simpler to put before the House, in the shape of a measure complete in itself, both what is preserved of the old Act and what is new in the present Bill. Beyond the changes in the method of taking the vote, there are the changes in regard to the persons who are to be qualified to vote; that is to say: we have included women. We will make no distinction based upon sex. We have also included minors; we make no distinction based on minority and majority, and although for clearness, I believe in the old Act Indians were included, we have expressly mentioned Indians in order to do away with any doubt.

Mr. KNOWLES: Does the minister not call it a new principle where he permits a soldier to ear-mark his vote for any constituency under certain circumstances?

Mr. DOHERTY: I respectfully submit that questions of this kind, although I would be very glad to answer them, are questions which would naturally come up in committee.

Mr. KNOWLES: I think it is a principle.

Mr. DOHERTY: I do not consider it a question of principle.