

*By Mr. Kennedy:*

Q. Could he not be selected for three months, during the election?—A. I would just as soon—

Q. Could you get nine men in Canada who could give you that local assistance?

Mr. BOTHWELL: How much better off would you be?

Mr. KELLNER: The actually carrying on of the elections is not done in Ottawa. Ottawa simply over-sees it.

*By Mr. Anderson:*

Q. Supposing that were done and this responsibility placed upon you: you are supposed to be non-political in holding that office; you have no personal guide or knowledge to whom you can refer, or from whom you can ask for information— --A. I think it would be unfair to impose that duty on the Chief Electoral Officer, unless he had the power to appoint public officials.

Q. Then it would go back to the Secretary of State?—A. No.

Q. Supposing you had the power now vested in the Secretary of State, that is, the naming of the returning officers. How would you get your information?—A. I would appoint the Sheriff, for example, of Edmonton, or the Registrar at Edmonton without enquiry. I know he is a public officer, and I can rely upon that. I would not get into such trouble as arose, for instance, under different circumstances.

*By Mr. McPherson:*

Q. Your position is that unless the statutes contained a list of officials from whom to appoint, you would not want that power?—A. As a matter of fact, the form does not matter, because the Act has now a provision in it that anybody who is appointed as a returning officer—whether with his consent or not—must go on and act when a writ is sent to him, subject to the penalty of fine and imprisonment. So there is no difficulty about the compulsory feature; it is in the Act now.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. Supposing you were appointing the Sheriff—take the case of Nova Scotia up to within recent years—do you think the Conservative party would agree to a proposal like that? Every returning officer in the province of Nova Scotia would be of the opposite political faith.

The CHAIRMAN: The witness thinks there would be a "saw-off," for in the other provinces, every sheriff might be a Conservative. Taking it by-and-large throughout the country, he thinks we would get about a fifty-fifty split.

*By Mr. Bothwell:*

Q. Take the constituency of Swift Current, 225 miles long and 65 miles wide. If an election came on in the fall of the year, it would be impossible for the sheriff to spend his time in looking after the election campaign as returning officer?—A. That is practically true.

Q. He would have to deputize somebody else, some junior in his office, to do the work because he could not go out and attend to it?—A. That is what is very frequently done now. The person who is nominally the returning officer does not do the work; it is done by his election clerk. It does not matter whether the returning officer does the work himself or has someone do it for him. Of course, you gentlemen know more about that than I do. I am only speaking to you out of my experience, but I have no trouble with returning officers since they were definitely appointed for the purpose of serving their parties in the offices—