

Mr. HEAPS: In my view the cost is no more for compulsory voting than it costs at the present time.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. It is your intention to do that?—A. Yes, it is my intention to do that, to try to find out if possible the probable cost in Canada if we adopted the Australian system in its entirety.

Mr. HEAPS: As compared with the cost to-day.

WITNESS: That is my idea.

Hon. Mr. STEVENS: Mr. MacNicol made a remark a moment ago which I think would be well to keep in mind, that it would cost Canada less. One of the points in the minds of many of us is the heavy cost that parties and individuals are put to in elections in Canada, entirely apart from the public cost. If we could devise some system which would be slightly perhaps more expensive publicly, but which would eliminate a lot of what I would term the curse of private cost and expenditure, it is well worth consideration by Mr. Butcher and the committee. I should like to ask Mr. Butcher to keep that point in mind when he is making his comparison.

Mr. HEAPS: I can see where compulsory voting would have a great many advantages, not only to the candidate but also in a general way in regard to the whole question of election. It would do away with a great many things that most of us consider objectionable insofar as the elections are concerned, and we would not have the kind of appeal that is put to the electors by the different parties to-day. While I am not committing myself at the moment to the general question of compulsory voting, I am inclined to favour this phase of it.

Mr. TURGEON: While I am not saying at the moment whether I am for or against compulsory voting, as I am not sure, I should like to mention one thing that has not been emphasized here. There have been remarks made about reducing the cost to the candidates. Now I suppose everybody here is a potential candidate for the next election. I am just as anxious to have the cost of candidates reduced as anybody in this room, but I do want to point out the danger in trying to eliminate the cost to candidates, political campaign funds and all other phases of the situation, which will likely arise. There is a danger of giving the government control over parties. I am just mentioning this as a word of caution.

Mr. HEAPS: That would not happen under a scheme of compulsory voting.

Mr. TURGEON: I am not saying it would, but the question of the cost to candidates has been interjected into the question.

Mr. HEAPS: I do not think we should ask the candidates to pay for anything.

Mr. TURGEON: I am throwing it out as a word of caution. You may create a condition in Canada that would approach conditions in other countries where governments now control political parties through control of political machinery. I am not saying that we should not continue to study compulsory voting; we should. I am not saying that compulsory voting would lead to that conclusion, but there is that danger existing in every democratic country to-day, the danger of having the control of the political machinery and political parties in the hands of the government. Following that just as sure as anything goes the fear of expressing your political views and opinions. We may possibly reach that in our endeavour to lessen the cost to candidates. I am throwing that out as a word of warning. There may not be much in it, but I am giving it for what it is worth.