

the Secretary of State will find that our elections in the West are going to get into a terrible mess if there are one or two thousand votes—and I venture to say that that will occur—which will have to come before the judge for trial. Imagine the examination of several hundreds of people, even in a judicial matter, with other witnesses possibly coming in.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman has forgotten, or possibly has not observed, the conditions under which a ballot can be tied. First, the enumerator must have refused a man the right to vote. Now those cases would not be many.

My hon. friend feels that there may be a great many challenged ballots, but there is a great check which never was used in the provincial contest. The agent must take an oath that he has grounds for believing, and does believe, that the man appearing to vote has not the right to do so, and he must swear to the reasons for so believing. Of course, he may take oath lightly, and there are some who will, and there would then be a number of tied ballots; but I do not think the election will be in a "mess" on that account. It would hurt the candidate if they tied too many ballots. In any event, supposing they did, it simply means there will be some delay until it is decided. In this contest, in war time, there is bound to be many a delay before we know who is elected, because the soldiers' votes count will not be here for many days after. I apprehend that in this coming contest many a one will not know whether he is elected or not for many days after the election. This is unfortunate, but it is true.

Mr. McCRAVEY: I think this is going to be an uncertain election for probably a month after election day. We will not know absolutely who is elected, and who is not, for perhaps that length of time after the polling day. My recollection is that in the election in the city of Prince Albert in 1905, there were over 300 tied ballots.

Mr. MEIGHEN: There was no check, though.

Mr. McCRAVEY: Not of this character. I do not know that the objection is removed very much, because I think if you post up a list and perhaps only ten days before the polling day you have several hundred names —

Mr. MEIGHEN: Just 300; that is the maximum.

[Mr. McCravey.]

Mr. McCRAVEY: My hon. friend says "just 300," but in some places you will have 500, because you are going to take the township as your unit, or something like that, and you will find it necessary to have polling places where there will be only half a dozen. It is just as easy to take 300 votes in one ballot box, as to take 200, if it is a convenient place for voting. You will have some polling places in which there will be a very large number of ballots in one box, and in which there must be a tremendous amount of information obtained. I have spoken to the minister with regard to registration in cities, and he expressed the view a few moments ago that it is desirable to have as much finality as possible. Will he tell me whether he has given consideration to the proposal to have a registration which will be complete with all proper appeals taking place in our cities. Because it is there the great difficulty over this tied ballot will come. There will be more challenges and so on on account of lack of information, whereas if the applicants for registration have to take the oath before they come on, it is a very simple matter.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Of course, in Ontario cities is done. The provincial authorities have a regular board on which sits a judge to do this work, and we simply have to adopt the machinery.

Mr. GRAHAM: That is the registration.

Mr. MEIGHEN: It is called that. It is really enumeration. In the west, there is no such machinery. We would have to re-erect the machinery and would have to constitute the whole board. We would have to apply the law to suit the times and conditions. I think we would be obliged to have something different in each province. In British Columbia for instance, there is machinery for revision, but it is revision by a provincial officer. Of course it would not do to accept that. In Alberta, there is no machinery at all, neither is there in Saskatchewan. I think there is some new machinery in Manitoba, created by a later Act, I am not just sure what it is. It would be much more difficult to do it in the western provinces. I thought of trying to have something in the western provinces similar to what there is in Ontario, but it did not lend itself to the application of that principle nearly so well as it suits Ontario, and we shall use all our means to try to get it in the western provinces as we have it, and trust to the check to safeguard it, and provide for the