

that time all the papers are in the hands of the returning officers. These deputies that are asking for transfers to different sections are the subordinates of the returning officers, and it strikes me that instead of making the registrar the party for delivering these certificates, it would be much better to continue the old practice. What does my hon. friend say to that?

Mr. GUTHRIE: I like the old system best too, but it is only when the certificates are asked for within the last day or two that my hon. friend's suggestion would be applicable, because the revised lists do not get to the hands of the returning officers until the last few days. Supposing a week before polling day in a constituency of long distances one wanted to get a certificate to enable a man to vote at a distant poll as one's agent, I do not think one could get it from the returning officer. The list in a city, town or village would be in the hands of the revising officer who would be a judge, and in the country in the hands of the registrar, who would keep it until polling day and would attend the poll.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: The returning officer has the list two or three days before the polling day?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: Why not insert his name in the section as well so that he can issue certificates if necessary?

Mr. GUTHRIE: The idea was to keep it within bounds. We cut it down to two. If we are going to allow three officers, I think it will have a tendency to mix things up. I have no objection if the committee want it that way, but I think it is a wrong principle to encourage.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: I think it will be found in actual practice that in many cases a man will want a transfer within two days of the election. The registrar and the other officers may not be at the place, but the returning officer is the head, and he is the man who then has possession of the list and will make the transfer. Therefore I think that in addition to the registrar and the revising officer the returning officer should be added to this clause.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I am afraid it will only result in conflict; we shall have duplicate certificates, and so on. However, if the opinion of the committee is in favour of spreading this out, I do not object.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Why not let this section stand until we take up the duties of registrars?

Mr. GUTHRIE: All right.

Section stands.

On section 54—Counting of ballots before opening of poll—Candidate may act as his own agent—Provisions requiring presence of agents.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: There is a slight change there from the former law. The Bill as drafted states that the agents and electors must be present at least fifteen minutes before the hour fixed for the opening of the poll. I do not think that limitation is in the old statute.

Mr. GUTHRIE: The old section was 141, and it reads as follows:

Agents and electors entitled to be present in the room of the polling station during polling hours shall be entitled to have the ballot papers intended for use thereat carefully counted in their presence before the opening of the poll, and to inspect such ballot papers, and all other papers, forms and documents relating to the poll, provided such agents or electors are in attendance at least fifteen minutes before the hour fixed for opening the poll.

Former section 140 starts then with subsection 2 and it continues down to line 31. We merely transpose them. Subsection 3 is old section 4. I do not think there is any change; there may be in a word or two but none in principle.

Section agreed to.

On section 55—When polls shall be held, etc.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Might I first point out a clerical error to give sense to the first subsection? After the word "but" in line 44 of subsection 1 the following words should be inserted "at an election other than a general election." I move that this amendment be incorporated in the section.

Mr. PROULX: Why make a difference in the period that elapses between nomination and voting? Why not make it uniform all through?

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: This changes the practice of the past of having the election held a week after nomination; the time is now two weeks. Is that the effect of this provision?

Mr. GUTHRIE: In bye-elections there will be a week between nomination and polling day; in general elections, fourteen days.