

the voters alphabetically. This list would be there, open for reference, and accessible to anybody who desired to see it. I cannot understand why my hon. friend should think it necessary to raise such a purely fanciful objection to a reasonable proposition such as is contained in this amendment.

Mr. BENNETT. If my recollection serves me right, the polling places are all stated in the printed proclamation which announces the polling day. But to my mind it seems clear that if a polling division is divided in that way, it would be announced in the proclamation that the voters' named from A to M, for instance, would vote at John Smith's shop, and those from M to Z would vote at Tom Brown's shop. In that way no trouble could arise, such as the hon. member for Kent (Mr. McInerney) anticipates. That is on the assumption that the polling places are named before the polling day, in the Dominion Act, and that they are also stated publicly in the proclamation issued by the returning officer prior to the election day. But I submit for the consideration of the Solicitor General that the number of voters in each division should at least be 300. I have been referring to the voters' lists in my own riding, and I find that in one polling division there are 514 names on the list, there were 302 votes polled in that division. If this law goes into effect, as at present anticipated, there being 514 names on the list, there would be three polling divisions in that one district. Now, let it be fixed at the number of 300, then there will be two in that division. I notice in the lists of that riding that there are a number of polling divisions having over 250 names, but not 300. Now, if you restrict it to 250, the result will be that in rural districts you will have to split the division, so to speak, and as two houses may not be close together for the purpose of polling, then a man, not finding his name at one polling place, and not knowing the proclamation and the change, he would be forced perhaps to go a mile or half a mile further to the other place. I trust the Government will see their way clear to allowing 300 names to be on one list, because if there are 300 names on the list, I am sure there will not be over 260 polled.

The PRIME MINISTER. I find by looking at the local Acts that the average number is 200, the limit under the provincial law in Ontario is 200, in Quebec it is 200, in Manitoba 200, in Prince Edward Island 200. But I recognize there is some force in the argument of the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Bennett). For my part I would have no objection to making the number 300 instead of 200.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. The objection I raised a little while ago would still stand, so far as Manitoba is concerned, where the population is not so dense as it is in the eastern provinces. The Solicitor General, when I

called his attention to that fact, referred me to subsection "e," which says:

It shall be the duty of the returning officer appointed by the Governor in Council to constitute polling divisions, and to appoint and fix polling places and polling stations in all cases where, under the laws of the province, it is the duty of the returning officer at provincial elections to do so, and he shall to that end have the same powers as are vested by such laws in such returning officer.

On turning to the election law of Manitoba, sections 86, 87 and 88, I fail to find that the returning officer in that province has any such power. In regard to the establishment of polls, the returning officer, upon the receipt of the writ of the election, shall "forthwith thereafter fix a poll in and for each of the polling divisions provided by the list of electors in a central and convenient place therein."

The next section provides that the building in which the poll is held shall not be a tavern or place of public entertainment, and there shall be access to the poll for every elector. Section 88 provides that the polls shall be established "in central and commodious localities, in such manner as to be at distances not less than 100 yards apart from each other in any city, town or village, or one mile apart in any rural municipality or unorganized territory." These are all the powers the returning officer possesses with respect to the establishment of the polls, and, therefore, subsection "e" in this Bill does not confer any power on the returning officer, who will be appointed by the Governor in Council. In some parts of our province, where the population is very sparse, it would be unfair and unjust to compel people to travel a long distance in order to record their votes. I hope the Solicitor General will allow the returning officer—and I will trust the returning officer in this case—to make a special polling division under such circumstances.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. From what is the hon. gentleman reading?

Mr. LaRIVIERE. From subsection "e" of the present Bill, and sections 86, 87 and 88 of the Revised Statutes of Manitoba.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. Chapter 49 has been supplemented by the Act of 1892, chapter 12, and also by the Act of 1894, chapter 9.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. I stuck to that Act, because it was my own Act, and I did not think it could be improved.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. Chapter 25 provides that the registration clerk shall divide the district for which he is acting into polling divisions containing not more than 250 voters. That, no doubt, meets the difficulty.

Mr. LaRIVIERE. That is the old provision.