

Mr. GUTHRIE: I am told there are counties where the court house is in a most isolated place and where there are no people.

Mr. DENIS: It should not be left optional on the part of the returning officer to choose a private residence where there are public buildings in a locality.

Mr. GUTHRIE: It is optional as the clause is drawn. I do not think any difficulty can arise over this. It never has in the past in so far as I have known.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Under the old Act 25 electors were obliged to sign a nomination paper. By the present Bill the number is reduced to 10. Is there any special reason for that?

Mr. GUTHRIE: The only reason is that in some of our remote districts where the population is scattered it is sometimes difficult to get 25. There is no more reason why 25 should sign than why 10 should not sign. Ten is just as good as 25.

Mr. J. H. SINCLAIR: I wish to say a word in support of the proposal of the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's (Mr. Fielding) for simultaneous by-elections. I think it is a good one. The law that exists to-day gives an advantage to the party that happens to be in power. Take a case where there are two vacancies; one is in a constituency that would be expected to support the Government, while the other one is doubtful. The Government announces a by-election in the constituency which will give them the seat so that it will influence the result of the election in the second constituency. That is the use that is made of the present law and it is an advantage that the Government should not have. It opens the way to manipulation. The proposal of the hon. member for Shelburne and Queen's is against manipulation and I endorse his proposal.

Mr. GUTHRIE: There is a clerical error in line 10 on page 30 of the Bill. The words "in the notice" appear there. The word "notice" should be "proclamation." I move that "notice" be struck out and "proclamation" substituted therefor.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Another amendment is necessary in line 46 on the same page. The present reading is "where such person is absent from the province." The word "province" should be struck out and the words "electoral district" inserted to make

the paragraph accord with paragraph (c) of subsection 6.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Then in line 16 on page 31 of the Bill the first four words are "of the candidate elected." The word "the" should be struck out and the word "a" substituted therefor. The reason for that change is that in some constituencies two members are returned, and if we use the word "a" instead of the word "the" it will apply to such a constituency.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GUTHRIE: A change has been suggested by the Parliamentary Counsel in line 26, that before the first word "agent" the word "the" should be inserted.

Amendment agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall the clause as amended carry?

Mr. DENIS: The \$200 deposit required of a candidate is the same amount as in the old law and my recollection is that this sum has been demanded for a great many years past. But now the high cost of living becomes a factor in the situation. The value of money is only derived from its buying power, and I submit that to-day \$500 has no greater buying power than \$200 had when this amount was fixed in the first instance as the deposit required of a candidate. Consequently to-day a deposit of \$500 would not mean more in value than \$200 did years ago. For that reason I would ask that the deposit be made \$500 instead of \$200. I have an additional reason for urging the change and it is this: Members of the committee will be surprised to hear that 169 deposits were lost in the last general election. In other words 169 candidates throughout the whole of Canada ran at elections without being able to procure half the votes of the candidate elected. The figures by provinces were: Ontario, 51; Quebec, 54; Nova Scotia, 5; New Brunswick, 9; Manitoba, 12; British Columbia, 18; Saskatchewan, 11; Alberta, 9; and in the beautiful province of Prince Edward Island there were none. Consequently if you take it for granted that the candidate who loses his deposit is not a serious candidate before the law—and he is not a serious candidate because if he were he would be entitled to the return of his deposit—why should that candidate's deposit be confiscated when he does not secure half the votes of the winning candidate? It is because the law takes it