

Mr. CASTONGUAY: It has been the complaint after each election. I am not in a position to say whether or not it is increasing. I do know this is a problem at least since 1934. An extensive study was made of permanent registration and absentee voting by committees of the House of Commons from 1936 to 1939. I am not able, however, to give you any information as to whether or not this is increasing.

Mr. BELL (*Saint-John-Albert*): Have you any conclusions in addition to the statement you have read in the light of the present-day situation and in the light of the failure of 1935?

Mr. CASTONGUAY: The only comment I can make would be that I do not see any serious objection to our present system. I may be rather naive, or it may be thought I am sitting in an ivory tower when I make this statement; but I received only one complaint in two general elections, from candidates, to be tabled by the Speaker of the house.

In my dealing with general elections this system appears to be giving general satisfaction, except that it does not provide facilities for people to vote who necessarily have to be absent from home.

My only other comment is that the permanent list is not the answer, because it will create new problems. Moreover, it is a very expensive package. The degree of expense would depend on whether we could use letter carriers, rural mail carriers, municipal officials, and so on, and give them a supplementary payment, other than their salary, to do this particular work.

There are many methods of applying a permanent list; but if it is proceeded with as we do it now, and if we appoint enumerators, I would imagine that we would have to have a half-yearly revision. You must remember that the list of electors contains 10 million names, and we would have to make about $2\frac{1}{2}$ million changes a year to that list.

The normal percentage of changes, for instance, in connection with family allowances—I saw their accounts—is 24 per cent of changes in addresses, and so on. I have not even explored the cost of keeping these changes up to date.

They certainly could not be centralized at a central office here. This whole procedure would have to be decentralized, and with $2\frac{1}{2}$ million changes a year, this would involve a great amount of clerical work, unless it was possible to obtain I.B.M. machines to replace the clerks. But that is one factor alone.

A half-yearly revision would cost \$4 million a year if we were to use our present methods of obtaining enumerators. This is merely an estimate, but it is based largely on our present system, if we were to draw from the same pool for our election officers as we do now.

If we changed that principle and went to mail carriers, letter carriers, rural mail carriers, municipal officers, provincial officials, and so on, and if we supplemented their income to do this particular work—I think in Australia for every 100 notations, they are paid so much, but it is not comparable with what we pay our enumerators here.

The cost factor is a great one; and whether that extra cost to cure this particular problem that now exists would be warranted, I am not in a position to say.

Mr. CARTER: A lot of electors are disfranchised because there are no advance polls on whose lists they are, and because they are on the move,—let us say, from boat to boat, on the Canadian National boats. Although they can put into a port in the same electoral district, nevertheless they cannot vote there, because their names may not be on that particular polling list, but on a list farther up the coast. Could something be done to alleviate that situation?