

well understood that if a number of agents get these certificates, they can go into outlying districts where they are not known, and the danger of personation then becomes greater than if only a distinct number, fixed by the statute, were appointed by the proper officer. If hon. gentlemen will refer to section 61 of the Dominion Elections Act they will find that :

The returning officer, on the request of any elector entitled to vote at one of the polling stations, who is appointed deputy returning officer or poll clerk, or who is named the agent of any of the candidates for a polling station other than the one where he is entitled to vote, shall give to such elector a certificate that such deputy returning officer, poll clerk or agent is entitled to vote at such election at the polling station where such elector is stationed during the polling day.

Then it goes on to say :

2. The returning officer shall not grant such certificate for more than two agents for each candidate at or for each polling station.

3. Every person so appointed deputy returning officer, poll clerk or agent, and claiming to vote by virtue of such certificate, shall, if required, before voting, take the oath in the form R.

4. Such oath, with the corresponding certificate of the returning officer, shall be filed with the deputy returning officer at the polling station where the person taking it has voted.

The object of this Bill is simply to amend the 48th section of the Northwest Territories Act so, as to make it as nearly as possible similar to the section in the general Act. The Bill says :

Every enumerator shall attach to each of the two copies of the voters' list which are by section 30 of this Act required to be posted up by him within each polling division, a written notice which shall be signed by him and shall designate a place and time where and when electors may conveniently find him during at least two consecutive hours on every day, except Sunday, of the eight days next before the polling day, for the purpose of applying to him for such certificates.

I am told on very good authority that this has happened in several instances, and I am not imputing any motives to anybody. The enumerator, after giving certificates to a certain number of gentlemen to represent a certain candidate, then disappeared, so that the agents or representatives of the other candidates could get no certificate at all.

So there are two dangers in the law as it stands to-day—the danger that a great many certificates may be given, thereby increasing the opportunity for personation; and the unfairness resulting from the law, inasmuch as the enumerator, by thus disappearing, can prevent the other candidate from getting certificates and being represented at the poll. Now, if that is so, it appeals to the fairness of hon. gentlemen opposite whether it would not be better, under the circumstances, to assimilate the law that is in force

Mr. CASGRAIN.

in the Northwest Territories to the General Elections Act, and make it incumbent upon the enumerator who gives these certificates to be at a stated place during stated hours for the eight days which precede the polling, so that he may give certificates to the agents of both candidates. That is the first provision of the Bill.

Mr. SIFTON. My hon. friend (Mr. Casgrain) has the statute before him. Will he say who are entitled to receive certificates ?

Mr. CASGRAIN. The deputy returning officer, the poll clerk and any agent. That is where the difficulty comes in. I understand there is no difficulty about the deputy returning officer or the poll clerk, but there is difficulty about the agent. All we ask is that the enumerator be put in such a position that he will be obliged to give certificates to those on either side who ask for them; and, secondly, that he will give only three certificates. The General Election law says two certificates, but this provides for three. I remember that in the provincial legislature of Quebec, when this question came up, it was agreed on both sides that it was a wise provision to limit, as much as possible, the number of certificates that might be given. And in the election law that was passed by that House when I had the honour of sitting there and of proposing the measure, two certificates were allowed to be given by the deputy returning officer to the representatives of the candidates. Here, owing to the different circumstances in the Northwest Territories, the Bill allows three.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN. And they to be given by the enumerator.

Mr. CASGRAIN. Yes. That is another circumstance made necessary by the condition of affairs in the Northwest Territories. The Bill goes on to say :

(c) the certificates issued by each enumerator shall be numbered consecutively in the order of issue ;

(d) the certificates shall not be issued in blank.

This is to do away with another source of fraud. Certificates in many instances, before the General Election Act was passed, were issued in blank, so that anybody could get them. In fact, the agent of the candidate or, sometimes, the candidate himself, went about with blank certificates giving them to anybody, thereby again increasing the danger of impersonation.

(e) the certificate shall contain in writing the name of the person to whom it is issued, and shall state that he is a qualified elector, the polling division in which he is entitled to vote, and, if he is a deputy returning officer, agent or poll clerk, the polling station for which he is appointed.

Section 2 of the Act provides that this certificate shall be filed with the returning