

up of those lists in the rural ridings; because the man could vote on election day. But in the cities the lists must be completed fifteen days before the election.

Mr. BOYS: If a voter is not on the list, he cannot vote.

The CHAIRMAN: It is essential that some proper system of compiling the list be in force.

Mr. LADNER: The decent thinking people of all political parties, and those who do not belong to political parties, like to see clean elections carried on by officials who have the respect and confidence of the community. That can be accomplished by means of the proposal that Mr. Boys has referred to, and I would be very much surprised if any member of the committee would find that an objectionable suggestion. At least it should be given a trial for one year.

The CHAIRMAN: Then will we take that for granted?

Hon. Mr. CANNON: Mr. Chairman, before we pass on to anything else, I have only one word to say in answer to what has been said already. First of all, I think there has not been one word said by anyone as to bad character, or the disqualification of any of the returning officers who were appointed by Mr. Castonguay. The only criticism is whether they should have been Liberals or Conservatives, or more Liberals than Conservatives, and so on. That has to do with the political complexion, so to speak, of the returning officer. I don't think that the members of the committee want to exaggerate matters. There is one thing we have to bear in mind; since 1921 we have had three general elections, including the 1921; and the only election that was brought to the notice of the House of Commons, where corruption was shown to have been practised on a large scale was the election in Alberta, a very unfortunate case.

Mr. HANSON: You do not mean corruption; you mean election irregularities.

Hon. Mr. CANNON: Whatever it was, there was only one election brought to the attention of the House. Therefore, I say that no one can conclude from that that wrong-doing is general or in fact reach any other conclusion than that the election officials throughout the country are law-abiding citizens.

Mr. HANSON: That only means that the parties get together and decide that there shall be no election.

Hon. Mr. CANNON: No, I beg pardon, I do not think that the candidates of either parties have really any strong complaint of the electoral officers in any constituency. I know in my constituency in 1921 and 1926, all the officials were appointed by the Conservative government. I have no objection to that system and I know that I never had any difficulty with any of those men. They were very honest and very reasonable men and I think that can be said generally about all our elections throughout Canada, with some very few exceptions.

Mr. BOYS: Don't you think something prompted Mr. Biggar's report?

Hon. Mr. CANNON: I do not agree, Mr. Boys, with the inference that you draw from Mr. Biggar's report. Mr. Biggar does not lay much stress on the fact that these officials might be Conservative or Liberal or Farmers or Progressives. He says that the change that should be introduced in our whole system would be to have permanent officers instead of officers who only hold office for an election. So that permanency having been given to their position, an improvement in the efficiency of the system will follow. I think that is what he had in mind.

The Committee now face this situation: appointments were made and our discussion was given to the returning officers. Some members say that not enough officers of our own political faith were appointed. Will it be suggested that Mr. Castonguay should take 50 Conservatives and 50 Liberals? Would that improve the situation? If you do not want to have a partisan appointment,