

*By Mr. McPherson:*

Q. If we wipe away all camouflage as shown in past history, if the Chief Electoral Officer had the power to appoint the returning officers, would he not drop letters to friends in the various districts asking whom they would recommend?—A. With my present experience, I think it would be the same, if conditions of that kind were imposed on me. I would feel under obligation not to make any inquiries of a political nature.

Q. You would not find anybody who qualified.—A. All I would want would be honest men.

Q. If you were to go to a man for a recommendation in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta, for instance, you would hunt for a man capable of judging and recommending a person for this office, and he would be a strange man, if he had not a strong interest in politics himself, who would not recommend somebody of his own political faith.—A. As a matter of fact I do not think it makes a great deal of difference where the Chief Electoral Officer gets his information, because my experience is that if the appointment is non-political it will be treated by the holder as being non-political. We are taking our judges every day from those holding political beliefs and having no trouble at all.

Q. I do not object to that system of nominating. It has been satisfactory, and yet I think when you get down to brass tacks and wipe away the camouflage, you will find the appointment finally goes to one side or the other.—A. You could not very well get away from that.

*By Mr. Hanson:*

Q. Your analogy of the appointment of judges is not a fair one. When a man is appointed to the bench he is appointed to a high and important position, and he dissociates himself at once from politics. In every election you are simply pushing men into the maelstrom of politics.—A. I do not think you can get a perfect system. All you can do is to get a better one.

*By Mr. Kennedy:*

Q. Have you read the report of the committee of last year?—A. No, I do not think I have seen it.

Q. I would like you to look at section 4 of that report on the first page which reads as follows:

Your committee is of the opinion that the cause of corrupt and illegal practices in the election held in the federal constituency at Athabaska in 1925 was the partisanship, ignorance and incompetence of certain election officials.

Would that have happened in 1925 if the responsibility of selecting those officials had been placed in the hands of the Chief Electoral Officer, who has no political affiliations?—A. It could not have happened; it really could not have happened.

*By Mr. Kellner:*

Q. Is the only objection you see to the appointment of a deputy returning officer in each province the fact that you would not have a job for him?—A. Yes, and it is a very serious objection, because if he has no functions he has no responsibility.

Q. Supposing for a minute you were prepared to delegate some of the powers which the Chief Electoral Officer has under the Act, and which he does not use, or has not used in the past—suppose you delegated them to the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, and let him carry them out; would that not provide him with a job and give you more satisfactory machinery?—A. No; the work would have to be done in Ottawa.