

with the Minister of Justice that it would be well to introduce a provision in the law so as to make them responsible for their actions.

Mr. CASEY. I quite agree with the proposal to make the returning officer give security. I fancy the reason he has been omitted from the list of officers who give security is on account of the old practice of appointing sheriffs and officers who were officials already under bonds. I do not think there can be any objection to paying the returning officers an amount sufficient to induce responsible men to take the position. We ought to pay them substantially and well, but I do not quite like the way in which the increase is made here. The addition of \$2 for any polls over thirty is right enough perhaps, but I would prefer to see the returning officer given a considerable increase in his minimum lump allowance, rather than see the mileage increased as in the proposed amendments. This is an increase of 25 per cent. on the mileage, and the mileage being a matter within the returning officer's own control, if he happens to be a man who would look sharp after his perquisites he could increase his allowance considerably by travelling more miles than would be necessary. I do not see, however, what reason there can be for considering the poll clerk underpaid, and increasing his mileage by 25 per cent. also, but I suppose the Minister has a reason. Under paragraph 14 of this proposed amendments it says: "For each mile necessarily travelled for collecting ballot boxes." During our discussion the other night it was well understood that it was the intention of the Government that the ballot boxes should be brought in by the deputy returning officers whenever it was possible to do so. It was urged by several members, of whom I was one, that they should be forced to bring them in in all cases so as to secure the superintendence of a responsible official over the boxes until they were finally handed to the returning officer. I objected then, and I object still, to allowing a returning officer to send out an irresponsible person to bring in these ballot boxes. This increase in the mileage will certainly induce the returning officer to go around and collect the boxes, or to send some one to collect them. The returning officer's own time may be worth 12½ cents per mile each way, but if he sends a man with his own horse for that purpose, the pay is absurdly high, and it is a premium for delay on the part of the returning officer. I find also that there is a provision made for swearing the deputy returning officers after the close of the poll, and if the deputy has to be sworn by the returning officer it is necessary that they should meet and I think it would be better if the deputies would bring in the boxes at once and be sworn. I find also that there is a provision made to pay a reasonable sum to the returning officer for supplying ballot boxes and stationery. I always understood that ballot boxes were furnished by the Government, and I think they should be so furnished to secure uniform and efficient construction of the boxes, and to get them cheaply by having them made in large quantities. Those are all the points which I wish to refer to just now. I put the greatest emphasis upon the objection to the manner of increasing the pay of the returning officer. I should much prefer his minimum salary being increased, leaving the mileage as it was be-

fore, so as to avoid the temptation to unnecessary mileage. I also think he should not be allowed to go around and collect the ballot boxes, but it should be the duty of the deputies to bring them in forthwith.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. As regards the mileage, I have no personal knowledge. I merely speak from the information given by the Auditor General, who has checked all these accounts, and who has made strong representations for two or three years past that 10 cents a mile is not sufficient to cover actual disbursements; and finding this Bill before the House, although it had reached a late stage, he drew the attention of my officers to the necessity of remodelling the schedule.

Mr. CAMERON (Huron). Is it intended to pay 12½ cents each way?

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. Yes; for each mile travelled, the same as before.

Mr. CASEY. I did not say that it was excessive pay for the returning officer if he went himself. I said it was excessive if paid to another man sent to collect the ballot boxes. I merely urged that if his present allowance was thought to be too low, it would be better to make that up by an increased allowance in another form than in the shape of mileage.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. I think the present system will be better. We have to consider the two classes of constituencies, those in the cities and those in the country. In the city constituencies there is a great deal of labour and responsibility involved owing to the large number of polling places, whereas in country constituencies there is a good deal of travel, and on that account a good deal of absence from home and occupation of time. If we adopt the system embodied in the schedule, we give remuneration to the two classes—to the city returning officer a direct allowance by paying him according to the number of polling places, and to the country returning officer a larger allowance in the way of travelling expenses. If we made their allowance a fixed sum all round, we would not apply it proportionately to the amount of work done.

Mr. CASEY. I was not objecting to the allowance per poll.

Sir JOHN THOMPSON. As regards the travelling allowance, the opinion of those best qualified to judge is that 12½ cents per mile for the mileage actually travelled is a more reasonable allowance than 10 cents. I admit that the schedule requires alteration, and with the permission of the Committee I will make it read thus:

For mileage of deputy returning officer and poll clerk going to and returning from the polling station and delivering ballot boxes, each mile, 12½ cents.

We allow the same rate to the returning officer in case he should have to go and collect the boxes, because we do not make it imperative on the deputy returning officer always to bring them in. We lay that duty upon him, but we do not take the duty away from the returning officer, in case he should have to go, through accident or eccentricity on the part of any deputy returning officer. In such a case it is only fair to allow him the same mileage.

Mr. CASEY. I think that substantially removes the objection.