

Canada Elections Act

no maturity, because they do not know the consequences they do or might do eventually.

I object absolutely, as the hon. member for Rimouski used to say, to the study of this question. It should be considered far more thoroughly so that we might know if it will be reasonable one day to lower the voting age.

In the province of Quebec, Mr. Lesage's party lowered the voting age and that was fatal to it. If the provincial Liberal party had not lowered this age limit, it would probably be still in office.

Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that young people have always cast their vote without being aware of what they were doing but there is one thing I can tell you: they do not vote just for the sake of voting, they vote to be able to enjoy a dancing party or for what little money they can get to move around and enjoy themselves. That is what the majority of them have in mind, for they are not that much interested in politics. As I said earlier, there are exceptions to the rule, but I am sure that most of our young people think that way.

Mr. Speaker, for all those reasons, we cannot bring down the age of the voters in order to enable these young people to go to the polls, especially where federal elections are concerned since these are more important and carry more implications than provincial elections. Indeed, action taken by federal members is not confined to the provincial level but has a bearing on the international scene. We know what we are doing but we have yet quite a lot to learn and though we have attained maturity, many of us still make sometimes very serious mistakes. Just imagine then what could happen with a young chap who is unaware of the consequences of his acts.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the said bill be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: I should bring to the attention of hon. members that the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe) had the floor

[Mr. Latulippe.]

at six o'clock. He relinquished the floor to the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. O'Connell). May I take it there is agreement in respect of this course of action?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Martin P. O'Connell (Scarborough East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I should like to know whether I may—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We have not yet settled the first problem. Let me bring to the attention of hon. members that the hon. member for Compton relinquished the floor at six o'clock. Certainly, no other member can take possession of the floor for the purpose of moving a motion unless there is unanimous agreement on the part of hon. members to allow him to do so.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): D'accord.

Mr. Yves Forest (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, by leave I move:

That the order for second reading of Bill C-72, to amend the Canada Elections Act (age of voters) be discharged and the subject matter of the said bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: I understand there are now two motions before the Chair. I will put the first one to the house. Mr. Forest, seconded by Mr. Deachman moves:

That the said bill be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Motion agreed to.

[Translation]

Mr. Forest, seconded by Mr. Deachman, with the unanimous consent of the house, moved:

That the order for second reading of Bill No. C-72, to amend the Canada Elections Act (age of voters) be discharged and the subject matter of the said bill be referred to the standing committee on privileges and elections.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The hour set aside for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. I now leave the chair until eight o'clock.