

that knowledge of the affairs of this country which would enable him intelligently to cast his vote either in favour of the Government or against the Government, or in favour of one candidate or another. Is not that reasonable? That is the view the minister very properly took in 1915 when he provided that there should be residence, but here we have a Bill which enables men who, to all intents and purposes, are foreigners, to cast their votes in England or in France in any one of the constituencies of this country and in respect to the election of a candidate in a constituency in which the parties are pretty nearly evenly divided. They might thus have a controlling influence, and their votes might decide the election against the votes of those who have remained at home as well as of Canadian boys at the front. That is an injustice of the worst possible kind to the people of Canada and to the Canadian soldiers who have gone to the front.

This section is most objectionable in other respects. Men who have not gone to the front, men who may have enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy, minors, boys of fifteen, sixteen and so on up to twenty-one years of age who may have enlisted as midshipmen in the Royal Canadian Navy, will, under this section, belong to that class who will be entitled to vote. That is also unfair. This Bill gives opportunities for fraud, for enabling men to control elections who ought not to be permitted to control them as against the votes of the mass of the general public. Such a section ought not to be in a measure of this kind. The Minister of Justice may say: Men will not do anything of that kind; those who have charge of the elections will not do that. If he thinks that is the case, he is very innocent.

I am sorry to say that the ordinary political machine in this country—and I do not charge this entirely against the Conservative party—will leave no stone unturned to carry an election, and this Bill presents the greatest opportunity which any party machine could possibly desire. It gives to those in control of the machinery of government a most unfair advantage, and one which ought not to be given. My hon. friend has suggested that as those who come to this country and join the Canadian Expeditionary Force are prepared to fight for Canada, therefore, they should be given the opportunity of voting on the question, who shall carry on the government of this country? And my hon. friend said that one of the great questions with which they would be familiar was the question whether we should

have compulsory military service in this country or not. But does my hon. friend forget that there are many other questions upon which the election which is about to be held ought to turn? Does he forget that there are questions connected with the conduct of the war from its very beginning down to the present time which the electors ought to consider, and which ought to be a controlling factor in the issue? Does he forget that when our boys were sent to the front at the commencement of this war, they were sent without machine guns with which they could defend themselves, and that in the early battles thousands of our boys were shot down who might have been saved if they had been properly equipped with machine guns? Does he forget that our boys were sent to the front, equipped with a rifle which they found to be inefficient? Does he forget that the excuse which was made in this Parliament was that the failure of the rifles to work was due to the defective ammunition with which they were supplied? Does he forget that there are other questions connected with the scandalous waste of public money in connection with the supplies which were purchased by this Government? Does he forget that all through this war from the beginning to the end everything has been carried on from a partisan standpoint—from the standpoint of how much patronage could be given to the Conservative party and to the Conservative machine throughout this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific? Does he not think that these questions ought to be considered by the electorate of Canada? Does he suppose that these non-residents who have lived all their lives in the United States and other countries, even though they be British subjects, are familiar with all these questions to the extent that the Canadian boy at the front or the Canadian electorate at home is familiar with them? These men surely could not be expected to be familiar with all these questions. The sound principle is that which was adopted in the Act of 1915, to give the vote to those only who have been residents of Canada for a certain period, and who can fairly be classed as Canadian citizens and interested in the proper government of the Canadian people.

I am sorry to have been obliged to make these remarks. I have great respect for my hon. friend the Minister of Justice. I thought that this Bill had not been drafted by him. I thought it had been prepared for him by others connected with this Government, and that he had introduced it per-