

*Canada Elections Act*

Unfortunately, I am not quite in agreement with the hon. member, in spite of his good intentions when introducing this bill.

In the present situation, in a country in turmoil, in a country where too much confusion prevails, where the young lack leadership and do all sorts of things, it would not be advisable to adopt such a policy, that is to lower the voting age to 18.

At 18, the young are all schoolchildren, they all attend classes. So, they certainly do not have the time to keep abreast of politics, and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that if we authorized voting at 18, some 18 year-olds would run as candidates in the elections.

The responsibility for things done during an election campaign, if taken seriously, is more serious than one might think because they are intended to improve the economy. Positive, carefully considered decisions must be taken and I do not think that the majority of the people who are not 21 yet are mature enough to make any valid political decisions. I think that it would be unwise on our part to grant the right to vote at this time to young people of 18 because many of them at 21 know absolutely nothing about politics and therefore cannot come to a decision or express valid opinions in that respect.

I agree that among those who have not yet reached the age of 21, some may be more advanced than others.

In fact, there are some who, at 18, are quite responsible but there are very few. Most young people at 18 are not responsible enough to come to a positive decision on matters such as the subject we are discussing now.

I have seen with my very own eyes, during the last election campaign, wealthy politicians organize dances and send invitations out to young people who were not old enough to vote. These young people are not concerned at all with politics; they would rather drink, dance, date this or that young lady. They are concerned with the car in which they will ride, it is the only thing they care about. Therefore, there is no sense of responsibility at all. I have seen in my riding meetings organized by old political parties at a cost of several hundred dollars, where there were almost only young people. There were practically no serious-minded people at those political meetings or dances organized in

order to secure votes. Therefore, if the right to vote had been given to those 18 year olds, the politicians with the greatest financial means, the ones that are the most gratified by their own party and who organize dances, might have obtained their votes by being able to win them over more easily.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we must dwell upon the way people may act. We must also recognize that we are not merely mossbacks. An 18 year old is not an old-fashioned person, but a young man. It is a man who is supposed to have had some education, to be somewhat serious-minded, to have even a certain maturity. However, at the age of 18 years, according to several enquiries that were conducted, to the numerous questions asked to most of the young people, the answers were rather shifty, and quite negative. This shows that people of that age are not mature enough to vote logically and intelligently at the time of elections, especially in a country like ours where great changes are now taking place.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. LeBlanc) said earlier that young people must have certain qualities; they surely have qualities and nobody questions that. Young people have qualities that should be taken into account; we must guide young people, we older politicians. Young politicians must also guide the young people who have the right to vote or are involved in politics. They should teach them politics; they should show them what is to be done, what is to be changed, what is to be improved in an economy, and that is almost untouched upon in the schools. When young people of 18 have finished their studies, they have learned almost nothing about political economy.

● (5:50 p.m.)

I think it would be beside the point to say that it would be useless to allow these young people to play a part in our politics and in our economy, which must be reformed and which needs people who have been thinking, people who have been reflecting because we are now on the eve of a revolution. The young people are about to revolt.

Young people no longer believe the old politicians. They think they are old fogies, all of them. The old politicians do not do anything for the young because they have