

the philosophy of democracy, and yet the fact remains that there are 171 members in this house supporting a government representing only thirty-five out of every one hundred who had a right to vote in October last.

I do not mention that for the purpose of complaint, far from it, but for the purpose of indicating that the observations that were made a few moments ago by the mover of the resolution have no support in fact. It is one of the most precarious conditions confronting this country at this time, when we have grave and serious problems to engage the attention of the people, that the government of the day, entrenched in power in the way it is, not only does not represent a majority of those who did vote but has only a little more than one-third of the support of those in this country who were entitled to vote in October last. That means nothing as far as this opposition is concerned or those who sit to the left of the Speaker; it is not said for that purpose. I do say, sir, however, that it is a matter of profound significance as affecting the welfare of this nation; for there is a tendency to use the power of a majority which has manifested itself already and which was disclosed in this house the other day by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe): "Well, call up the guards." That is all; "call up the reserves; look at our majority. In a few minutes we are going to do so and so. We have the votes; we are going to do it. Never mind; call up the guards."

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): The Minister of Justice never said that; those were Conservative words.

Mr. BENNETT: I thought the hon. gentleman would become a little excited. "Never mind; call up the guards." The hon. gentleman is waving his arms unnecessarily.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): That is past language.

Mr. BENNETT: Well, it was used as late as Thursday last. I mention this again because there is a tendency on the part of some members, especially the younger members, to think that because there is a vast majority you necessarily have the popular majority behind you. That is not so. Not only is this government without a majority of the popular votes in Canada, which is the negation of democracy; as I said a moment ago it has the support of only slightly more than one-third of the electors of this country who voted on election day.

What is to be done about a matter of that kind? In Australia they had this question to deal with and they dealt with it by compulsory voting. They increased their votes up to

ninety-one per cent of the total vote in the first election after they enacted the compulsory voting measure, and they brought it up to ninety-five per cent at the next election. I have not the figures of the total vote cast in the last election, but I mention this because it is not a difficulty singular to Canada; it is a difficulty that has to be met with in new democracies. In the older countries the situation is not so acute; the difficulties are fewer, but in this and in other new democracies such as Australia these difficulties have to be met and overcome.

There is another method to which we will have to have recourse in this country, which has been found most satisfactory in Great Britain; that is the limiting of the cost of an election in each constituency. That will have to be provided for by some method such as that adopted in Great Britain to attain that end. When you look at the returns and see the avowed cost of an election—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. BENNETT: I say the avowed cost; the smiles and laughter of hon. gentlemen opposite indicate that they know perfectly well that their returns do not show what their elections cost. In England the judges have been very careful, in administering the law, to insist that the slightest deviation from the rules laid down shall constitute an offence vacating the seat. There was one case in particular, shortly after the law came into effect, that had the result of vacating the seat. The admitted expenditures were a little too large, but they were able to show much larger expenditures in the end. As a result conditions are much improved as compared with those prevailing before this act was passed.

I mention these things on the threshold of my observations because I hope they are not wholly controversial. After all, when one has had experience one realizes that there are some questions that far transcend mere party considerations. I say to this chamber to-day that the result of the election, not viewed from the standpoint of party but viewed from the standpoint of its effect upon democracy, having regard to the number of votes cast, the number of those who had the right to vote and the cost of the election even as indicated by the returns, presents a situation that calls for a remedy. The two remedies I have indicated are those applied in Australia and Great Britain to improve the conditions that there existed. In England they had far worse conditions, before they remedied them, than we have had in this country. Sometimes we compare conditions in England to-day with conditions in Canada to-day. If we are to com-