

various parts of the country, are registered immediately before an election. They may be in one constituency at one time and in another at another time, and if they were required to have fixed residence in a constituency for any certain length of time, other than a very short one, they would be unable to qualify under the Ontario Act. That is one reason why the Act of 1915 regarding the soldiers' vote was manifestly unfair, and it would have disfranchised thousands of men who went overseas at that time, men who perhaps were residing in the Northwest provinces, who came home a month or two before enlisting and who lost their residence in the West, and in any event might not have chosen to let their votes go if they had a choice, but would have preferred to vote in their home constituencies. These men would be disfranchised under the 1915 Act, and I think it legitimate that these men should, under the terms of this Act, be allowed to vote and have their vote counted in the constituency named by them. In 99 cases out of 100 they would be able to name the constituency they came from, the constituency in which they were trained, at least. Their residence there would have given them a very fair insight into local conditions in that constituency and of general conditions throughout Canada. These men, on the average, are trained in Canada from six months to nine months, and I think that should count as full residence, even to men from outside points who enlist in Canada. I know the case of a couple of men originally from Guysborough, and who came, one from the Fiji Islands and one from Australia. They were civil engineers who came to Canada with the intention of taking out commissions, but found that there were no vacancies and eventually enlisted in the battalion which I took overseas. These men will undoubtedly desire to have their votes recorded in Guysborough if they are allowed to vote. I think they have a perfect right to vote, although not residents of Canada at the beginning of the war, and although they only came here for the express purpose of enlisting. I think this Act can be worked out easily and fairly, and I am satisfied that in working it out there will be none of this trickery we have found so many times in Canada. I am satisfied if a man is given a fair opportunity to record his vote over there, he will do it in all fairness, and nobody will suffer.

Mr. GERMAN: My hon. friend made an exceedingly patriotic speech such as we

usually hear from Conservative politicians at election time, who shout for the old flag and an appropriation, and say that every one who opposes a suggestion made by them is unpatriotic. No one in this House will contend that men who are fighting the battles of Canada should not have votes. I, for one, most certainly would not. But that is not the object of this discussion. The object is to have the Bill framed in such a shape that when these men cast their votes, those votes will be recorded in proper places, and that the votes may not be colonized or hived in some localities, to suit the exigencies of the occasion, which could be done very easily under this Bill. Whether it would be done or not is another question. However, it is better to avoid temptation than to be led into it. The Minister of Justice is allowing himself to be led into temptation in this matter. The hon. minister says that every elector, having joined the Canadian forces, whether in Canada or outside of Canada, whether ever having been in Canada or not, shall be entitled to vote. He may never have seen Canada, may know nothing about the country and may know nothing about the election or about constituencies. He is a British subject, having joined the Canadian forces, outside of Canada, and he casts his vote. How does he know in which constituency his vote will be recorded? Who will record it? How easy it would be for any one—I do not say this would be the case, but it might happen—by a little manipulation over there, to colonize a lot of those votes in some constituency where there is a close contest, and thereby change the result of the election by that very vote. Anybody who knows anything about elections knows that could be

9 p.m. easily done, and I submit that

before the Bill is passed provision should be made to prevent the possibility of manipulation. We cannot afford to place on the statute book a law which will present such opportunities for fraud. I am not charging that any one will be guilty of fraud, but it will leave the door open for such glaring fraud that it should not stand on the statute book of Canada.

Then, I ask who is a minor? Any one below 21 years of age is a minor, and a minor, either male or female, can be appointed, enrolled or enlisted in some force a few weeks prior to the election, and have the right to vote at the election. Hundreds of thousands of them could be appointed under this Bill. I ask the Minister of