

*Canada Elections Act*

a fair chance, without any patronage, black-mailing or bribery, to cast a free vote so that this house may be made up of free men.

However, Mr. Speaker, to reach that point any possible fraud should be prevented. I maintain that the present Elections Act has been obsolete for a long time and does not meet Canada's requirements. I would say, for instance, that in the Shefford riding, in 1965, the Creditistes lost an election not because the people were less créditistes—in fact, they were more inclined that way—but because the votes of the armed forces upset the results of the vote. I was present when the judicial recount took place in order to assist my colleague, the present member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau).

Four things have to be considered.

First, the members of the armed forces do not vote at the same time as the rest of the Canadian citizens; secondly, they do not use the same ballot; thirdly, they have no control over their ballot and fourthly, they are ill-informed as to what is going on in their respective ridings and in Canada generally.

Therefore, not only do the armed forces control the boys "left, right, left, right, left, right" as was said earlier by my colleague from Champlain (Mr. Matte), when a similar question was being discussed—but also, in some way, the military vote. I think that we have here a first rate instance of fraud.

On several occasions, Mr. Speaker, we asked the minister responsible for the armed forces—the Minister of National Defence—to investigate the matter very thoroughly. I sit on the committee on privileges and elections and I should like the sponsor of this motion to pass on my request to the minister—asking him to inquire on the military vote and to report to the committee so that we may study extensively and circumscribe this problem which, in my opinion, makes the military vote more or less just, more or less fair.

Mr. Speaker, the motion under consideration concerns first the people who are absent from their riding on polling day.

● (5:30 p.m.)

I agree entirely with that part of the motion since the present system does not make it as easy as possible for those who are called away from their own riding to vote on election day. Since Canada as a whole needs those votes, the polls must not be faked, but honest. I can only approve the mover on that point and congratulate him. I think the committee

will be pleased to examine the motion, because, according to me, it will bring some order into the present electoral system.

The second part of the motion deals with the armed forces. Here, I do not agree at all, Mr. Speaker, when we are told, for instance, and I quote:

b) to provide that armed services ballots shall henceforth be called absentee ballots and be counted simultaneously with other absentee ballots—

Up to there I agree, but I do not any longer when the motion states, and I quote:

—without, however, altering the present method of balloting used by the armed services—

The sponsor takes a step forward and two backward. If he approves the last part of that sentence, he is acting like a crayfish. A while ago, he talked eloquently about fish, I will now speak to him about crayfish. A crayfish is a shell-fish which moves a step forward and two backward; that is how the Liberal government is acting.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, shows that the present electoral system is accepted and that no change whatever is made to it. There is fraud not necessarily because the members of the armed forces are not in their constituency, since this would be working from a false principle. Fraud is due to the balloting system used by the armed forces.

I was present at the judicial recount for Shefford and Sherbrooke and I noted that we lost those two constituencies because the vote was fraudulent and not because people did not vote for the Créditistes.

What did I find out? That scores of ballots bore the same signature. Indeed, no one can make me believe that Canadian soliders have all the same signature. I recognize that strict discipline is enforced in our armed forces but surely not to that extent.

Secondly, many of those votes are in the same handwriting. Thirdly, I have noticed—and I can find it hard to understand—that very few servicemen of the Lotbinière constituency stationed abroad and known to me before they left, when I was not yet a member of parliament, voted for me whereas I know very well that they supported the Ralliement Créditiste before I did.

Now, if I add the number of servicemen outside Canada supporting the Ralliement Créditiste to the number of votes I got, Mr. Speaker, I get an impossible figure. Either these people have died or they were off their heads when they voted for the Liberal government. So, something did happen.