

Canada Elections Act

is the parliamentary caucus, not on the street demonstrating, waving flags, exciting and inciting. The proper forum is within this grand chamber.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that this is a time when we can be realistic not only in attitude but in action. It is all right to be committed but let us have a commitment with deeds. I think we have a lot to learn from the young people. As I listen to them, as I read about them throughout this nation, I believe we must start now reducing the communication gap, that gap which now-a-days means that if you are not under 30 you "ain't with it". It is very unfortunate when young people have to seek leadership from within their own group without relying on the wisdom and experience of those who have had an opportunity of laying a foundation for them.

That is why I am concerned and hope that this bill does not get talked out. This talking-out business is starting to confuse me. I see so many good things proposed, but then during private members' hour I look at my hon. friends on the other side of the chamber, and how many of them do I see? I see, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen of them. Are they going to talk this bill out? To my hon. friends opposite I say, let us be realistic. Let us face facts. I hope this chamber will send this bill to the standing committee which can deal with the matter in greater detail.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased I can devote a few minutes to expressing my opinion on this very serious question indeed. Young people have a very important part to play in our country, as in all communities around the world, and everyone, young people or adults, and especially we, the members of the house, should consider that problem carefully, with a view to finding a definite solution as soon as possible.

We all know that, for some years, that question has been discussed by the various executive committees of our pressure groups, such as the Chambers of Commerce and other organizations, as well as by our legislatures and the legislative bodies of almost all the countries in the world.

Today, as a matter of fact, I was reading a book written in the United States in 1949, by a Mrs. Julia A. Johnson, entitled *The Lowering of Voting Age*. The author makes an individual and almost exhaustive study of the whole question and reviews all the arguments for or against giving young people between 18 and 21 years of age the right to vote.

I realize that since then the same ground has been covered in our own circles. I remember that the question was debated in the province of Quebec in 1964, on the occasion of a political rally, with warmth and enthusiasm. Naturally, there was much excitement among the young people attending. For my part, I voted for the passage of a legislation to grant the franchise to 18 year olds.

Since then, and especially now with this bill, I go in for this slightly less radical approach as this matter is so important that, in my opinion, it should rather be introduced by a group of members of Parliament. Because also of all the aspects of this problem, many provisions may be neglected or forgotten if only one member presents such a public bill. I think that franchise for young people should be taken into consideration, but within the framework of the complete revision of our Elections Act which, I presume, will be made before long. And I suppose that in a short while we shall be able to study it in committee.

Young people must evidently be appreciated at their real value because, as we all know, they have many good points but they also have responsibilities. I am not one of those who say that they represent a group with dangerous opinions. I rather think that among them, those who make a lot of noise are a minority. They are the ones who cry the loudest while most of our young people are seriously preparing themselves either through studies or some form of training to assume in future the role assigned to them in order to replace adults when they attain their majority and maturity.

I think that a distinction between those two terms, majority and maturity, is necessary.

Maturity results from the complete development of an individual or a group, while majority is established through legislative enactment.

Our youth have a part to play at the present time. They will play their most important