

*Canada Elections Act*

that is done, then this age of 18 may be satisfactory.

Perhaps the hon. member approves of the change at the moment, I do not know. I am not so seriously concerned about that. I think we tend to get a little excited about when we should vote. Unless I misread some of the articles in the newspapers, the young people who had the opportunity to vote in the Ontario provincial election, in the opinion of some people, did not take full advantage of that opportunity. Whether there is a great demand amongst young people for the vote, I do not know. It is up to them.

**Mr. Reid:** May I ask the hon. member a question?

**Mr. Churchill:** Yes.

**Mr. Reid:** Did the hon. member read the correspondence in the columns of the *Globe and Mail* from the various presidents of the students unions outlining just what had gone on and the statistics that were used incorrectly?

• (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Churchill:** I did; I keep closely in touch with these young people in university. I am very fond of them. The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River is attempting to say that because he is 30 years of age he is more closely in touch with the young people than we are. I may tell him a true story about that. Two 17 year old girls in the city of Ottawa were having a conversation about a new teacher who had been appointed to the school. He was a young man who had been appointed science teacher. One of these girls had been away and had returned to town. She was talking to her chum and they went through the whole story about this man who had been appointed science teacher, giving a description of him, what he was like in class, his appearance and all that sort of thing. Then finally the girl who had been away said to her chum: "How old is he?" The girl who had been in town said "He's 25, but he's young in spirit". If the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River played hockey when he was 30, as I did, he would be considered an old man by the 17 and 18-year-olds on the team and would be called "Grandpa", as I was in my day. So I am sorry to say to the hon. member that he is really out of touch with the younger generation.

The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River mentioned that half the population of Canada is now under 25 years of age. This has appeared in the papers and has been spoken

of on public platforms. Apparently everything in Canada has now changed, they say, and Canada has become a youthful country.

I would suggest to those who write these stories and also to the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River that they call up the head of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, as I did, ask him for the census figures starting with the census of 1871, right down to the present as they relate to this age factor, and then they will get the same information that I got. It appears, sir, that Canada was a young country in 1871, when 62½ per cent of the people of Canada were under 25 years of age. Then as the years went by the percentage began to drop a little, and it is only now that it has picked up, according to the census of 1961 and the estimate of 1966.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing new in the fact that half the population of Canada is under 25 years of age, even though this has come to my hon. friend from Kenora-Rainy River as a great revelation, as though something new has happened in Canada. When I was 18 years of age, sir, there were more people under 25 years of age in Canada than there are at the present time, keeping in mind the proportion of population. That was the youthful period of this country, so there does seem to be some confusion.

I tell my politician friends not to get led away by this information. If they are looking for people to vote for them, then those people are the 21 year olds and over. About 10 per cent of the voting population comprises people in the age group of 21 to 24 years. Those who are 70 years and over represent about 10 per cent of the voting population. If hon. members want other figures, those between the age group 21 to 34, the vigorous, active part of the voting population, represent 33½ per cent, while those who are 35 and over and who are getting so old and enfeebled constitute 66¾ per cent. So to the politician who is interested in the people who are going to vote for him, I suggest he pay just as much attention to those who are over 70 as he does to those who are between 21 and 24 years of age.

If the voting age were lowered to 18 years of age, this would not make a very great percentage difference. The voting power in Canada would still rest with those people whom it is now customary to condemn—those who are 35 years of age and over. It is really too bad these people are around and we cannot get rid of them very easily. The young people will just have to wait their turn.