

*Canada Elections Act*

**Mr. Olson:** The apprehensions of your program break down.

**Mr. Douglas:** May I ask the hon. member a question? Would he agree that the inconvenience of having to wait even two or three weeks while the absentee ballots were counted represents much less of a hardship than disfranchising thousands of workers in construction camps and other people who have to travel around the country?

**Mr. Lambert:** As I indicated, I think this problem is over emphasized when you consider the realities regarding the number of individuals who actually do not get back to vote and the number who actually avail themselves of the opportunity.

**Mr. Cashin:** That is a typical Tory attitude.

**Mr. Lambert:** I think as far as the hon. member from Newfoundland is concerned, a great deal more effort is made in my area to get the people out to vote than is made in his.

**Mr. Cashin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. In my constituency one does not have to make the same effort to get the people to vote as in the hon. member's area because the people are genuinely interested as a result of their superior calibre.

**Mr. Bigg:** Why do you not make a speech?

**Mr. Cashin:** I will.

**Mr. Lambert:** Mr. Speaker, had the hon. member been in his seat when I made my speech he would realize that I agree that the problem is not a simple one. My purpose in rising was to point out some of the problems involved and why the committee on the Canada Elections Act should study all aspects of the situation instead of just sitting down to look at it for three quarters of an hour and then passing the whole thing.

**Mr. J. B. Stewart (Antigonish-Guysborough):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Cashin) would not applaud if he knew I am going to take what he would undoubtedly describe as a typical Tory attitude to the bill now before the house.

I think those things the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has cautioned us about are really quite relevant. Grave difficulties are involved.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame, shame.

**Mr. Stewart:** I must say to those members of the N.D.P. who are exclaiming, that there are some of us in this house who would like to see the business of the country conducted in an orderly way, particularly at election times.

I should like to say in relation to the typical non-Tory attitude taken by the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Bigg), when he proposed that new university seats should be authorized under the Canada Elections Act, that this would not be a good change or one that could be regarded as progressive.

University seats had their origin in the Middle Ages when universities were regarded as one of the classes of corporations in law which ought to be represented. The boroughs were another of those classes. I think it is now generally agreed, especially in the universities, that the restoration of a privileged class of voter represented by a special type of seat would not be desirable. I am sure that on reflection the committee on privileges and elections would come to that conclusion.

The hon. member for Edmonton West was insistent that a clarification in the Canada Elections Act concerning one's place of ordinary residence is important. I believe he is absolutely correct. There is no doubt about it that people proposing to vote in an election ought to know whether in law they are qualified; and consequently anything that makes it difficult for them to ascertain whether or not in law they are qualified is undesirable.

Ordinary residence is no mere technicality of the law, to use an expression that came from this side of the house. This is a very important ingredient of the electoral process. I should like to see this problem solved in so far as students are concerned, and in so far as industrial workers and other such persons who have to move around the country are concerned. This a problem that has to be confronted and not one that can be simply dismissed as a mere technicality of the law.

If we look at the bill now before us, sponsored by my hon. friend the member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Deachman), we will see that it comes far short of specifying the regulations which govern qualification. The bill says that a person who, being a student, is duly registered in a university may qualify. What does that mean? Does it mean he is duly registered if he attends one course, perhaps during the evening program at a university? I think there are at least two or three interpretations of that expression that