

*Canada Elections Act*

grave concern as to the effect these various polls may have upon the average voter. Indeed I gathered from his remarks that he is of the opinion that the voter is being led down the well-known garden path.

On this point I have to disagree. Few, if any, public opinion polls in the past three or four elections have, in my opinion, been correct. I say that the average voter, in the west at least, pays little or no attention to such polls. Voters meet the candidates and speak with them, and then make up their minds. I am sure that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) must know from all his years in politics that it is the people who make up their minds, not the polls.

I cannot accept the view of the hon. member from across the way who went on about the big money parties controlling such polls. Has he no faith or trust in his fellow citizens? Does he believe that most voters are so naive that they will believe anything they hear on the radio, see on television or read in the newspapers? I would not dare accuse the electors, in my riding at least, of such foolishness.

If we choose to enforce such a bill as Bill C-213 we are, in effect, telling the people of Canada that they are not to be trusted; that in the opinion of the supporters of this bill—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but I do so to seek the will of the House concerning private members' hour which, as hon. members know, started at 3.54 p.m. Is it the desire of the House that private members' hour be precisely one hour, or that we should allow the hon. member to continue until five o'clock?

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, at 3.54 p.m. we called it four o'clock so I think we should go to five o'clock.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Pearsall:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, we are, in effect, telling the people of Canada that they are not to be trusted. I gather that the supporters of this bill are of the opinion that the average Canadian does not have the intelligence to understand what he or she sees, hears or may read during an election campaign, and I find this carrying things a little too far. As I said earlier, thank heavens there are not too many of our electors sitting in

the galleries today, for I am afraid they would have some very harsh things to say about their representatives down below in this chamber.

I believe that the great majority of Canadians are intelligent enough to review all the issues during an election. They make their choice regardless of what the polls try to tell them. There is a poll conducted on the west coast which is known as the hamburger poll, and which has been going on for quite a few years. Perhaps other members have it in their areas as well. Some of the results of this poll have been really ridiculous, but it was amazing how it was only the news media that built it up to any extent. When the final results came in the man with all the hamburgers in his favour lost the election, and his supporters ended up with bad stomachs.

All through this bill the average Canadian is being told that he is not to be trusted when he walks into a polling station, or looks at television, or reads a newspaper during an election campaign, and I honestly feel that this is an insult to the average Canadian, indeed to all Canadians. They make their choice regardless of what the polls try to tell them. I believe all my fellow Canadians conduct themselves during an election in a manner that we would expect of them.

When I hear it said today that the Canadian people can be contaminated by such polls, I cannot help but wonder what is the thinking of the hon. member and how is he going to answer the people in his riding when he puts forward such a bill as this.

**Mr. Crouse:** He has been through eight elections so I think he can answer to them for a little while longer. Don't let that concern you.

**Mr. Pearsall:** Well, I told the House I was a naive backbencher. Therefore I cannot concern myself with this bill and I believe it should be withdrawn.

I should like to make one other point that I missed and which the hon. member raised. He attempted to convey to us that the kind of poll he was mentioning in his bill could have an influence—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Order, please. Once again I regret having to interrupt the hon. member but the hour allotted for private members' business has now expired. It being five o'clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday next at 2 p.m.

At five o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.