

Canada Elections Act

Motion No. 15 (Mr. MacEachen) stood.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of motion No. 16 in the name of the Deputy Prime Minister, and President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen). This is a motion to which the Royal recommendation is attached. The Chair had reservations as to the procedural acceptability of this motion since it went beyond the scope of the bill and was not relative to the subject matter of the measure as debated on second reading. Nevertheless, since there have been indications that the House might be prepared to give consent I will allow the minister to proceed.

Mr. Cafik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This amendment was considered to be put out of order at committee stage. The government agreed at that time that it was out of order, but in the belief that we are complying with the wish of the committee by proceeding in this way I am seeking unanimous consent for the motion to be put.

Mr. Dick: The essence of this motion was originally conceived by a subcommittee consisting of the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin), the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East (Mr. Hopkins), and myself. A recommendation along those lines was made in April, 1976. I thought it was a very worth-while proposition even though the government failed to put forward its legislation properly on the first occasion. I would certainly like to see this motion adopted and will give my consent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will put the motion to the House but in doing so I might mention that since motion No. 18 is consequential upon motion No. 16 a negative decision on motion No. 16 would dispose of both motions.

Hon. Norman A. Cafik (Minister of State for (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, in the name of the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) I move:

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-5, to amend the Canada Elections Act, be amended by adding immediately after line 37 at page 81 the following new Clause:

"70.1 Section 21 of the said Rules is amended by adding thereto the following subsection:

"(3) Every civilian who is

(a) employed outside Canada by the Canadian Forces as a teacher in a Canadian Forces school or as administrative support staff for such school, and

(b) qualified under the Act as an elector,

is a Canadian Forces elector qualified and entitled to vote under these Rules."

A number of representations have been received in connection with this question. Teachers working for National Defence headquarters on bases abroad are not at present allowed to vote, whereas members of the Armed Forces are. Representations have been made on this point by the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East as well as by other hon. members. I myself met with representatives of the Teachers' Federation while this bill was going through committee and indicated that the government was completely in agree-

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

ment with proposals to correct this anomaly. Hence we have brought forward this amendment not only on behalf of the government but at the request of members on both sides of the House in order that administrators and teachers attached to DND bases abroad may have the right to vote in Canadian elections.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East (Mr. Hopkins).

Mr. Epp: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I intend to speak on motion No. 16 and I am uncertain as to the speaking order. In view of the fact that a government member has just spoken, should he not be followed by an opposition member?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have no objection. I did recognize the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East though, and it would be for him to decide whether to yield to the hon. member or not. It is the prerogative of the Chair to recognize a member when he stands. The hon. member did send a note to the Chair so I had no hesitation about recognizing him—I know he is affected by motion No. 17 which he is proposing.

Mr. Hopkins: In keeping with the good rapport in the committee and having spent 12½ years in the teaching profession, from which members will understand that this is a serious interest of mine, as it is of the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) and others on the opposition side, even though my motion No. 17 has been ruled out of order I will gladly yield to the hon. member for Provencher on condition I may follow him.

• (2132)

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East (Mr. Hopkins) for his co-operation this evening. I find it rather odd that I can speak at this hour to my private member's bill, this not being the hour designated for private members' business. I am pleased that the government has accepted the essence of my private member's bill, which was introduced in the last session and given the number C-426. I have resubmitted the bill but it has not been called in this session, and now obviously will not need to be called. It does not have a number as it has not received first reading. As I say, I am gratified that the government and members of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections have finally seen fit to end in Bill C-5 an injustice which has been going on for too long. I agree with the hon. member for Renfrew North-Nipissing East that this is an injustice which should have been taken care of a long time ago.

In view of the publicity given to Bill C-426 and the involvement of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, their provincial organizations as well as the Canadian School Trustees' Association, I think certain facts should be placed on the record.

Mr. Hopkins: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Do I have an undertaking that I will be assured an opportunity to speak following the hon. member for Provencher?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.