

nation are much more serious than the average citizen is aware. This is a time for all Canadians, regardless of party, religion, ethnic origin, and vast regional disparities in economics and resources, to take the larger view, and to concentrate their minds and energies on working out practical solutions which will contribute to the enrichment of life and the unity of the Canadian people.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Leonard, for Hon. Mr. Croll, debate adjourned.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT (AGE OF VOTERS)

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE CONTINUED

The Senate resumed from yesterday the adjourned debate on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Argue for the second reading of Bill S-24, to amend the Canada Elections Act (Age of Voters).

Hon. Malcolm Hollett: Honourable senators, we have been sitting here for a long time listening to wonderful addresses, and it might be wise for me not to speak at this time. However, what I have to say is short because there is very little to be said that has not already been said about this bill to amend the Canada Elections Act.

A majority of Canadian provinces have now lowered the age at which electors may vote in provincial elections, as I think was mentioned yesterday. In Alberta, British Columbia and Newfoundland it is 19 years of age; in Quebec, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan it is 18 years. Ontario, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and New Brunswick still require voters to be 21 years old by polling day. It was estimated last August that there are about one million persons between the ages of 18 and 21 who would be eligible to vote if the minimum age for voters in federal elections were lowered to 18 years.

During the past several years private members from all parties now represented in the other place have presented bills to provide that the minimum age of voters under the Canada Elections Act be 18 years instead of 21 as at present. These bills have either been talked out or referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, but they have been warmly supported by members from every party.

To give honourable senators an idea of what the people of Canada think, in September 1966 a Gallup Poll reported that of

Canadians questioned on the matter 48 per cent favoured lowering the voting age to 18. In April 1967, 64 per cent of adults polled by Gallup in the United States thought that those aged 18 or more should be allowed to vote in national elections. In 1958, in Canada only 33 per cent of the adult population wanted the age lowered, whereas in 1966, as I pointed out, 48 per cent favoured lowering the voting age to 18.

I would also point out that during the lifetime of the 27th Parliament nine public bills were introduced by private members to amend this section of the Canada Elections Act. Six were identical and the others provided that the minimum age for both candidates and electors be 18 years.

I should like to congratulate Senate Argue on the able manner in which he introduced this bill yesterday. I personally—and I speak only for myself—am in favour of this bill to lower the voting age to 18. I could cite many reasons, but I do not want to take up too much of your time. I was born in Newfoundland, the son of a fisherman and a fisherman myself. Long before I was 18 years old I had to work in a fishing boat to help keep the family going. That is also true today of young fishermen and young farmers. They have to work to live. Why should they not be given the right to vote at the age of 18 when they have been working long before that age, and working hard? They have to eat, they have to be clothed, and consequently they have to pay taxes, and I therefore think they should be given the right to vote.

I was overseas during the 1914-18 war and there were with me a good many boys, as I call them, who were 18 and even younger. Some of them got there under age by different ruses. At any rate, there were many who were 18, and many of them stayed over there. I think at this moment of a friend of mine and of yours, a member of this Senate. I refer to the honourable Senator Carter, who was overseas in the trenches with me way back in the 1914-18 war, and he was only 16 years of age. He and many other young fellows were there offering, and in many instances giving, their lives for you and me. Should not these boys have the right to vote? I am sure everyone in this house agrees that if they are expected and ready to fight for their country they should have the right to vote.