

Mr. MACINNIS: It is not a fair argument. Surely, if you are not going in the direction of dictatorship when you extend the franchise. If you had a clause here, or an amendment, to suggest that only persons at the age of forty-one would be eligible to vote there would be some quite logical support for the argument which said that that was a trend towards dictatorship. Then, the question of their civil rights in my opinion does not enter into it at all. Everyone will recall that for a great many years we did not extend the right to vote to women, and that when first the vote was given to women in the United Kingdom it was limited to age thirty.

Mr. RICHARD (Gloucester): And we removed the legal disability first.

Mr. MACINNIS: That should be remembered, and there were lots of disabilities so far as women were concerned. There were a lot of those disabilities some of which were removed a long time before we gave them the right to vote. Every extension of the vote has been done grudgingly. All people in authority are disinclined to extend the privilege of citizenship in its full measure to others. Now, the question is, is a person at the age of eighteen capable of deciding as well as a person at the age of twenty-one, or any age over that—say a person of ninety-six or one hundred and two—are they able to decide who is the best person to represent them in our parliament and our legislatures.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Why not make it sixteen?

Mr. MACINNIS: Well, why not make it thirty. The age was arbitrarily set anyway when determining legal status.

Mr. MUTCH: It is related to legal responsibility.

Mr. MACINNIS: The responsible age of twenty-one was arbitrarily set. No one can say that a person at the age of twenty years and six months is not equally responsible in fact.

Mr. MARQUIS: But it was done by the proper jurisdiction.

Mr. MACINNIS: Quite, and this would be the proper jurisdiction if we did it. Remember, judges are not allowed to vote but they are allowed to make contracts. This question of allowing the right to vote has nothing to do with all these other questions and it is purely a hesitation on the part of legislators to extend the right to elect members of parliament to a large number. Where, as I have said, persons of eighteen years of age are considered to be wise enough and capable of defending their country; if that is the case, then they have the right to say as to why the country goes to war before they are asked to risk their lives on the field of battle.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you discussed this thoroughly last year.

Mr. FAIR: In my province, Alberta, we have fixed the age of nineteen as carrying the right to vote on provincial matters. In the dominion house we are dealing with affairs which are not provincial. But, as for the argument put up by Mr. MacInnis, I cannot accept it. I feel I am quite justified, and I feel I am on the right track, when I say we should not allow the vote to go to those who are still minors. If you are going to bring it down to eighteen, why not bring it down to fifteen; and if we bring it down to fifteen why not bring it down to twelve. You have an elastic mind, and these elastic minds are possibly the cause of a lot of our difficulties today.

The CHAIRMAN: Now, gentlemen, you discussed this last year. Shall we have the question put?

Some HON. MEMBERS: Question.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is on the amendment to subsection 1 (a); and it has been moved by Mr. Zaplitny that the words "twenty-one" shall be