

Privileges and Elections

are inadequacies in that act, so serious that they affect the very principle of democracy.

I pointed out in the last session, that the provisions on the military vote were more or less sound especially as the results are made known only a week after election day. To my mind, this leads to fairly serious consequences at times, since some riding change allegiance precisely because of that. Surely, that is something that must be taken care of.

There are, obviously, a whole series of solutions which the committee will study. We hope that the recommendations which are made will fill in the gaps and improve the Canada Election Act.

With regard to lowering the voting age to 18 years, we are not opposed to it in principle; still, every aspect of this new ruling should be studied.

Some way should also be found to enable every Canadian to cast his vote at election time. Perhaps the possibility of making voting compulsory, in some way or other, could be considered.

The most important aspect of all this, however, is the one on which the previous speaker dwelt, namely, the two provisions that are excluded, according to the resolution now under study.

Even if the Canada Election Act were to be a masterpiece of perfection in all its other sections, the fact remains that we will destroy their value if we do not improve the wording of sections 62 and 63, because we know full well that through election funds we can unfortunately act against democracy. It is unfair that the election of representatives of the people should depend exclusively on publicity—and to speak of publicity is to speak of expenditures—not only for the candidate who can suffer from a lack of publicity, because of a shortage of funds, but especially for the people whose judgment can be misled at election time by slanted publicity.

There is no need to give too many examples on this subject. We all know that it is very easy to get round section 62 and 63. One only has to examine the report on election expenses which has to be submitted by all candidates, to realize that this is a monumental farce. Several thousands of dollars are sometimes spent in some ridings, while only a few are declared.

If, as I said before, harm is being done to democracy, it is certainly when elections are

won with election funds and misleading publicity.

This is easy to explain since with advertising we buy products for which we have absolutely no need. It happened again in 1968. Through advertising, a product was forced upon us. This is psychological: under the pressure of advertising, people finally give in.

And we end up with the following results: too often, the leaders are not necessarily those the people would like to have.

Therefore, the process of democracy is distorted by the action of election funds and election expenses. We should delay no longer in finding solutions to this problem, otherwise we will keep on making a laughing-stock of ourselves. As far as I am concerned, I have figured out certain very obvious expenses and if I compare them with those which have been declared, I cannot help laughing. Should we keep on showing the people that this is a mere sham? Let us be sensible, let us think about it carefully and take it upon ourselves to change such situations which I would term as odious.

Personally I would not want to have to admit that I have been elected thanks to an election fund. In fact, I can honestly say in this House that the amount of \$1,344.50 which I have declared in my report on election expenses, is quite accurate. I have not spent an extra cent in the Champlain riding and I challenge anyone to prove the contrary. Thus, people who honestly try to make their opinions known to the people, in accordance to their means, have to struggle against an infernal machine driven by almighty financial interests.

● (5:00 p.m.)

There is a problem much more serious than to know if we must have the young vote at 18, 19, 20 or 21. Indeed, we must find means to discover what representatives the people want and this, without undue pressures, without any false publicity, without anything but sheer honesty.

On this subject, the Ralliement créditiste has always showed, for a few years, that it was possible to wage an election without money or with a minimum of money.

It would thus be advisable to start immediately to study the advisability of limiting election expenses and to think immediately of determining the means of giving everybody an equal opportunity to express his opinion and this, in an adult and equitable way.