

simple fact is that in several of the provinces we have lowered the voting age without lowering the age in other respects, and there was no problem. There is no problem here. There is no need at all to deal with the age at which people can be elected to Parliament, when we are dealing with a very simple matter, solely that of the voting age.

There is a clamour about the lack of responsibility in certain of our young people today. On the other hand, we are faced with the irrefutable fact that never before in history have young people of high school leaving age, which is 18, been as knowledgeable or as prepared to accept the responsibilities of citizenship.

This bill merely provides a means by which we hope it will eventually be possible for these young people, who are ready to accept some kind of responsibility, to be given the kind of responsibility which will make them responsible for building the country and not just for protesting against things which now cause them only frustration.

That is the simple thing that this house is being asked to do. To send this bill to a committee at this stage is, in my opinion, unwarranted delay of the day when we give to those young people a right which they deserve and which Canada would be the better for if they had it now.

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck: Honourable senators, as chairman of the committee to which it is proposed to refer this bill, perhaps I may be pardoned if I say a few words about it.

To begin with, let me assure my friend Senator Argue that I am voting for this bill.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Moreover, I am strongly in favour of it and I endorse every word Senator Prowse has said with respect to it and the desirability of its being on the statute book as soon as is reasonably convenient and possible. Therefore, my attitude with regard to the bill is one of complete support for it.

However, I would point out that in the Commons there are now some 20 bills—12 of which are either here or there, passed or ready to be passed. In addition, there are eight which are close to that category and which will wait over until next fall.

Therefore, to send this bill to the Commons now will advance it no further than if we keep it within our own control over the recess and send it down in the fall. Additionally, I assure Senator Argue that I will give

him every co-operation in the meantime. If we send it to the Commons now it will be pigeonholed until the fall and no action taken with regard to it, beyond referring it to a committee, to be held in cold storage with a half dozen private bills already pigeonholed.

It would be very easy for me to convene the committee, and in five minutes we could report the bill back to the Senate. But we will get nowhere by doing that. On the other hand, should we keep it here until the fall and then, in co-operation with Senator Argue and others, we can call a number of people, some of them prominent, and people who are in favour of this bill, and we will make it alive at that time.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: You have disqualified yourself as chairman of the committee, I think.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I will be chairman at that time.

Hon. Mr. Choquette: But you are giving an opinion, a long way in advance of consideration by the committee.

Hon. Mr. Thorvaldson: You are suggesting that you will call only those people who are favourable to the bill. I am not unfavourable to the bill, but I am amazed at such a statement.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I did not say I was going to invite only those who are favourable. I pointed out to Senator Argue that, in co-operation with him, he could call all those who are in favour of the bill. I did not say I would not call those who are unfavourable, or any one whom any member of this chamber or others may suggest. I think every one here knows that I am not the kind of chairman who would restrict the hearing of any one.

I am talking only about the advantages of what we are doing. If we pass the bill now and it goes to the Commons, it will go into a pigeonhole and stay there, and it will come out of cold storage in a perfunctory way in the fall. On the other hand, if we send it to a committee of our own house at this time and in the fall we take it up again and make it a live issue—as we will—the bill will get very much better consideration than if we pass it now.

I do not think we need any more evidence with regard to it, but that is not the point. Probably every senator here has already made up his mind as to whether he is in favour of it or opposed to it. It is not so much the argument here one way or the other, as it