

Mr. FAIR: Mr. Chairman, I do not think this is good business. At eighteen years of age many of our young people are still at school. In school, we have definite information that there are ideas put into the heads of young people which are not good for them or good for the country. At the age of eighteen a person is not legally responsible, if my knowledge of law is correct. I think a person has to be twenty-one years of age.

If a person is allowed to vote at eighteen, then that person should also be eligible for election to the House of Commons or the provincial legislature. If a person is eligible for election to the House of Commons then that person is also eligible for appointment to the Cabinet. And I think when you take this all into consideration that we should watch our step before making this change. It was suggested in the argument last year and I think on other occasions that people of eighteen are eligible for service in the armed forces and if they are good enough to go to war they should be good enough to have the franchise. That is not quite correct. In the army they are not on their own. They are entirely under orders, they merely have to do what they are told; and I think it would be a step toward getting on to dictatorship, in my opinion, to have people of this age given the vote.

Mr. MARQUIS: Mr. Chairman, I had a few words to say last year when I objected to a motion of this kind. I think we have to recognize that there is a distinction between wartime and peacetime. When a young man of eighteen has enlisted, naturally he has the right to vote. His government gave him that right to vote. It is a fact that he is in the army under discipline; but now, when we are talking about giving the right to vote to a young man of eighteen we have to consider if this young man has full-capacity. He does not obtain full civil rights in practically all the provinces until he reaches the age of twenty-one. If we give the right to vote to a young man of eighteen we will have the following situation; this young man would not have the right to operate a business for himself, yet he will have the right to decide which government will administer the affairs of the country. Without taking up further time, Mr. Chairman, I think that I will leave it this way, I will not repeat what I said last year, but for the reasons I indicated then I cannot support the amendment.

Mr. RICHARD (Gloucester): Mr. Chairman, I feel the same. It is not in my opinion because we haven't thousands of young men who couldn't exercise that right to vote. I have known a great many young men who are well versed in public affairs, but there are too many disabilities existing today, they are too numerous for me to enumerate, from the political point of view; and, as Mr. Marquis says, a person does not reach his majority until he is twenty-one, he can neither sue nor be sued except through a guardian, someone who represents him. For instance, if he transfers any property it is not valid; I mean, it can be voided; the young man may change his mind after he becomes of age and he may repudiate the deal. There are certain limits to his responsibility while he is still a minor. If we are going to give them the right to vote, then we should have to remove from them all these disabilities and call him a major as soon as he has been given that right to vote. Personally, I do not think we should consider giving him the right to vote. I do not think anyone would be very much hurt by it. I think probably our young men will take a more serious part in activities as they approach their majority, but we must not forget the fact that they are still under civil disabilities.

Mr. MACINNIS: Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to say anything at this time because I think pretty near all of it was said last year; but when Mr. Fair suggests that giving people the vote at eighteen might tend to dictatorship, I think that is going a little too far.

Mr. MARQUIS: And I object too, I think that is not a fair statement.