

our business by that hour. However, it turned out that my calculation as to timing was off, and we did not terminate our business until after 5 p.m., with the result that many of our colleagues were called upon to leave this chamber earlier to attend the meetings of these committees.

When Bill S-24 was called many of our colleagues had already left. Although I had intended to participate in the debate, on second thought I deemed it improper to ask honourable senators to give further consideration to this important measure in the absence of so many of our colleagues. I even went so far as to rise at the conclusion of Senator Davey's speech to ask for the floor, but I failed to catch Mr. Speaker's eye. Incidentally, this is part of the price I have to pay for the privilege of working in the shade of such a great man as my present deskmate and leader.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Flynn: You may take a bow.

Hon. Mr. Martin: I am too embarrassed.

Hon. Mr. Langlois: I was anxious to speak on this bill in order to underline its many and varied implications. As presently worded, the bill merely seeks the lowering of the voting age from 21 years at present to 18.

If we are to accept such an amendment to the Canada Elections Act, should we not be logical with ourselves and further amend the act to lower the age of candidates to 18 years also? This is a matter which calls for a good deal of consideration and study, because if we were to so lower the age of candidates we would have to take into account the legal capacity of the would-be candidates under the age of 21 to enter into contracts for election expenses. As you know, legal capacity is a matter which comes under the jurisdiction of other legislative bodies.

I need not go further into the implications of this bill and of any consequential amendments to the Canada Elections Act which might flow from its adoption in order to draw the attention of the honourable senators to the importance of giving this measure complete consideration and study. Furthermore, at the present time, there are some 14 bills proposing similar or comparable amendments to the Canada Elections Act before the House of Commons, six of which propose the lowering of the voting age. All these bills, together with the Canada Elections Act, minus the sections dealing with election expenses, have

been referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the other place.

I believe that this chamber owes it to the Canadian public generally to give ample consideration to this important measure and its implications, and also give the benefit of the advice of one of its most excellent committees to those in this house and the other place who will be called upon to vote on the question.

In moving that this bill be not now read a third time but that it be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, I am convinced that honourable senators will not consider this move as a delaying tactic in view of what I have said as to the importance of further consideration and in view also of the attitude taken in the other place on similar measures. I need not add that if this bill were to be sent to the other place this day it would very likely receive the same treatment as that given to those of similar nature which have been referred together with the Canada Elections Act to the Committee of the other place on Privileges and Elections. I therefore commend my motion to the consideration of honourable senators.

The Hon. the Speaker: I understand that the honourable Senator Prowse has indicated that he wishes to ask a question.

Hon. J. Harper Prowse: Can the honourable senator indicate what groups, if any, have indicated that they desire to appear and to give evidence with regard to this particular bill?

Hon. Mr. Langlois: The bill has not been referred yet and I do not think the public knows now that it is going to be referred, so how can I know what groups would be interested in testifying before the committee?

Hon. Mr. Prowse: Honourable senators, within that information, may I say a word or two?

The bill has been on the Order Paper for five months. It has been the experience of those who have dealt with other bills that where there is a desire on the part of anyone to come and give evidence, that fact is in the hands of members of this house, or at least of the chairman of the committee, well before we ever get to second reading stage, let alone to the committee stage.

As far as the arguments are concerned about all the other implications in lowering the voting age, this is an ingenious argument, but the facts do not support it. The