

already been well set forth by the member from Assiniboia. Of course the member from Assiniboia is now the senator from Assiniboia, our colleague Senator Argue, who is the sponsor of this bill.

I suppose Senator Argue has always been a controversial sort of character, especially so after he had the courage to switch his party allegiance. That, it seems to me, takes a special kind of integrity, and it is worth pointing out that he has remained progressive, dedicated and intellectually honest. He has a very tough role to play, honourable senators, and to his credit I think he plays it well.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Davey: Who are these more than a million new voters? Perhaps to know them is to understand them, because together knowledge and understanding make it difficult for fear to breed. In his speech the other day, Senator McElman reminded us that we live in another world than that which existed from 1914 to 1918 and from 1939 to 1945. Indeed we do. Just how very different the world is can perhaps be measured by trying to view the 18- to 21-year-old population in some kind of perspective. There are, of course, very many of them. In 1867 there were 200,000 people in this age group in Canada; in 1945 there were 650,000 between the ages of 18 and 21 in Canada; now there are 1,200,000. It is estimated that 30 years from now, by the year 2000, there will be 2,200,000 Canadians between the ages of 18 and 21.

It should be noted at once that in discussing this age group I am aware, as you should be, that they are not a unitary mass. I think that has been proven in the five provinces in which Canadians under 21 can vote in provincial elections. They are, I suppose, inclined to take modern technology and modern organizational skills for granted. It is, for example, us and not they who sit open-mouthed as man approaches the very surface of the moon. Instead, it seems to me, these young Canadians focus on far more fundamental ills that have afflicted succeeding generations for a hundred years—problems linked with duties, happiness, privileges, rights and responsibilities.

I honestly believe that the 18-year old in Canada today is more mature and better prepared than any comparable 18-year old before in our history. It is perhaps because of mass media; perhaps it is because of the advancing

educational standards. If he is better prepared, then it is equally true, it seems to me, that he is certainly more concerned than any comparable generation in history, a concern which usually manifests itself in a combination of idealism and activism, sometimes of course in protest. If we continue to ignore these young people—and make no mistake, honourable senators, if we reject this bill that is exactly what we will be doing, ignoring these young Canadians—it seems inevitable that this concern will devolve into apathy for most, cynicism for some, and of course violence for a few. Perhaps I should say a word about the current climate of violence, just to observe that it is no more violent than war itself, and to observe that it is certainly neither led nor inspired by people under 21 years of age.

Then who are these dangerous radicals to whom some of us would presume to give the vote at 18? When Lester Pearson became the Prime Minister of Canada, today's 18-year old was 12 years old. When John Diefenbaker became the Prime Minister of Canada, today's 18-year old was six years old. These, honourable senators, are not the people who created inflation, racial strife, national disunity, poverty, overpopulation, pollution, nuclear warfare. On the contrary, these things are our legacy to these young Canadians, and the sooner we involve them democratically in their solution the better it will be for all of us.

I suggest that, as with most reforms, this idea of an 18-year old vote is inevitable. The time to begin is now and the place to begin is here. I suggest, honourable senators, that a favourable vote in this chamber will escape the attention of neither the young people of Canada nor its government.

Hon. Hazen Argue: Honourable senators—

The Hon. the Speaker: I would remind honourable senators that if the honourable Senator Argue speaks now it will have the effect of closing the debate.

Hon. Mr. Argue: Honourable senators, this measure was first presented to this house by me on January 21. It has received a great deal of consideration.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Honourable senators, I have no objection to the honourable Senator Argue speaking, but it must be clearly