

*Canada Elections Act*

the principle of a reduction in the voting age was accepted by all parties in the Ontario legislature.

One of the advantages of modern youth is that they are much better educated, even at the age of 18, than were their forebears at 21. The old standards applied when making the legal age 21 are, I think no longer valid. For example, in Ontario one is not supposed to drink alcoholic beverages until he is 21, a regulation more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Why should one want to drink booze when he can easily get L.S.D., "pot" or any of the variety of drugs that are apparently readily available in our larger cities and universities?

The sophistication of modern youth has increased. It seems to me that youth should be given responsibilities commensurate with their knowledge and abilities. They are more knowledgeable today than were their forebears some years ago. Television, radio and the other communications media bring them more information about national and international events than their forebears ever had. What is more important, they are in a better position to digest and understand this information than their parents, who were raised under another type of educational system and in a different kind of world.

This brings me to another point, Mr. Speaker. The time honoured traditions, the qualifications that one had to have to hold responsible positions, that one had to be experienced, one had to be well known in his profession in order to advance, have gone by the board. It is no longer necessary to hang around for years in a profession, even in the House of Commons, before one gains eminence in that profession. I think it is necessary that we no longer place much value on just hanging around, but should recognize sheer ability and the will to survive. I believe that what we are looking for is quality and ability, not just being of a certain age, being in the right place and available at the right time. It seems to me that in all the appointments we make we must seek quality.

This brings me to another point, Mr. Speaker. Even granting, which I do not, that there is some value in a person hanging around and serving a long apprenticeship before reaching the top, that person's training and hanging around do not really help because of the type of environment and the fast moving world in which we live. This is a world of constant change. Because of this and the fact that things change so quickly,

[Mr. Reid.]

this type of experience is not as valuable as it once was.

We see that progressive companies and organizations are today putting youthful people in more important jobs. These companies are progressing because of it. It seems to me that in this country we are cutting off a generation and are going from the 60's to the 40's. Those in the late 40's and early 50's are being passed over. You have to do this because things have changed so much and our way of thinking and doing things is different.

If we are to survive it is necessary that we follow this practice in politics and bring our young people into political existence as full fledged participants. Another matter I wish to refer to is parliament itself and the type of legislation with which we are dealing. Ever since I became actively involved in politics in 1963 I have been impressed by one fact of parliament: we are dealing with the past, we are plugging the dike when the flood has passed; we are dealing with things that are no longer current. But we have to deal with them because we did not have the foresight or imagination to deal with them when the problem was upon us. We did not have the foresight or imagination to see that this is the way we were going and therefore we should take certain action. In other words, what we have been busily doing is trying to plug the dike after the flood has gone.

I think that if we were to bring youth into the political spectrum it would result in a different attitude. Members of all political parties, it seems to me, have suffered from this problem. All political parties would be strengthened if youthful people came into this sphere, because they would be participating more enthusiastically and providing their knowledge of what is going on in the world today.

Young people are much more able to grasp the environment around them than we are. Perhaps I should change that, Mr. Speaker. I should like to dissociate myself from other hon. members because I, and I think one other member, am still under 30 years of age. I am therefore a friend of the young people because hon. members over 30 are classified as enemies by the young. The slogan of the young people is: Don't trust anybody over 30.

To buttress this argument I should like to quote the words of the long time premier of Alberta, Mr. Manning, and read from page 27 of his very interesting book entitled "Political Realignment":