

Canada Elections Act

I strongly object to the second part, because I feel it is not up to the government to decide which party will be or will not be an official one according to the number of candidates of that party running in an election. If we do not amend this item, we will rightly be able to accuse the government of discrimination against the people seeking to elect a group of individuals who might be as efficient as any member of any party.

• (8:40 p.m.)

I should like to draw the attention of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) on clause 13 and ask him to delete the figure of 75 in the second part of the item and to replace it by: "a minimum of 10 to 20 per cent". I think the same suggestion was made by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre (Mr. Benjamin) and by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin).

Mr. Speaker, the President of the Privy Council stated in the House, on May 27, that the drawing up of a permanent electors list would cost \$13 million to the government and that, therefore, he rejected that possibility.

I know that it is sought in the act to be as fair as possible, but you will agree with me that many irregularities take place at election time. I feel therefore that we must absolutely find a solution which would encourage honesty at election time, and I endorse the views of many a member who would make it compulsory to carry an identity card that the elector would have to show to the clerk and to the representatives of the various parties, failing which he would have to sign an affidavit or to take the oath under clause 39. I believe that this amendment to the act would protect the elector and eliminate frequent frauds.

The amendments to clause 4 provide that when it has been necessary to suspend voting at a polling station on polling day by reason of a particular circumstance, the Chief Electoral Officer is empowered to extend the hours of voting at the polling station beyond the hour fixed for the closing of the poll.

I feel we should set a closing time for the polling stations, otherwise there might be delays in knowing the final results for the riding concerned, and this could influence the vote of those who might vote after learning the results in other polls of the same riding or neighbouring ridings.

In closing, I should like to congratulate the government for having inserted section 14 in the bill now under study. I am very pleased to welcome this new concept of maturity in

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

our people. I feel that Canadians between 18 and 21 can doubtless be considered as being mature people.

In our modern world, where communications media are lightning-fast, where education has become compulsory and accessible to almost every one, and where we feel an overall awakening in our young people, I feel that it is very wise to allow them to use the fundamental right of man, that of choosing his administrators.

I have heard many people say they believe those young people would vote according to the opinions of the group rather than according to the personal value of a candidate.

I believe we are all aware of the influence of opinion polls prior to elections, of the part played by the psychological climate of a community which influences the vote of numerous electors. I believe young Canadians will vote with far more seriousness, which will prompt politicians to present more realistic platforms than in the past, in order to solve the problems we have to cope with.

Students are often much more critical than older people. They are looking for faults and they find them. Being very active, whenever they dedicate themselves to a cause, they do it thoroughly, which could give a more rational and realistic meaning to our elections.

I believe however that we should find ways of letting people know what is going on in the House. That question deserves consideration.

Once again, I congratulate the government for inserting in the bill clause 14 which gives the franchise to every person of 18.

However, I think that we should consider the majority at 18 years of age which would grant privileges in all other fields: insurance, licenses and the right to go into beverage rooms. We should have more confidence in our young Canadians who want to grow up with a sense of participation in the life of the community as full-fledged Canadians.

In closing, I should like to ask the President of the Privy Council to give us the assurance that the report of the committee set up to study election expenses will not be left to gather dust because I am convinced that as long as we have not "tamed" the money which runs freely during election campaigns, it will still remain the main asset.

I should like to repeat some words spoken by my colleague from Lotbinière who sat on