

cynical to the ludicrous. Indeed, they have tended to ignore the only potentially valid reason, it seems to me, for denying the eighteen-year old vote, and that is that perhaps people aged 18 are not yet ready to vote. Let me give one or two examples of the arguments that have been used against this legislation.

We have been told that the Senate should not deal with this bill at all, that the Senate should not deal with it in the first instance, and that we should not support it because it is a private member's bill. On the contrary, I think the Senate should initiate more legislation and develop more ideas, and that senators should stop acting like second-class parliamentarians.

We have been told that people from 21 to 25 years of age do not want the 18-year olds to have the vote. It has been suggested that the people aged from 18 to 21 have not been able to mount any campaign in support of the idea of an 18-year old vote. If this is true, then naturally the 21-year olds, having obtained their majority, think that the 18-year olds should have to wait just as they had to wait. However, as I will suggest in a moment, there is contrary evidence even in this regard.

To suggest that people aged from 18 to 20 years should mount some kind of a campaign in support of an 18-year old vote is, I think, complete nonsense. How could they mount such a campaign when we are able to obtain only very little publicity for some of the meaningful things that go on inside this very chamber.

It was suggested that there was no public pressure for an 18-year old vote. This, of course, leads me to wonder whether it is our job to lead or to follow public opinion. In any event, let me point out the result of a national Gallup Poll taken in August 1968. The question asked nationally was:

In a federal election people don't vote until they are 21. It has been suggested that those aged 18, 19 and 20 should be allowed to vote. Do you approve or disapprove of lowering the voting age?

The results were as follows:

	Approve Disapprove Undecided		
	%	%	%
National Age	56	38	6
21-29	61	33	6
30-39	59	33	8
40-49	58	38	4
50 and over	49	45	6

I think the most ridiculous argument that has been advanced against this legislation is: "Why stop at 18? You will want to lower it to 17, to 16, and then to 15." It seems clear to me, honourable senators, that there has to be some lower age limit set on these things, just as there is for drinking, driving and, yes, going to war. It is unfair to suggest that those who support this legislation would propose a continual lowering of the voting age.

The arguments in favour of the legislation have already been well set forward in this chamber, and rather than catalogue them I would like to expand very briefly on one or two of them. First, I will say a few words about why the age of 21 was arbitrarily chosen in the first place. I came across an interesting quotation by Senator Javitz of New York State on this very point. He said:

Any choice would be arbitrary, just as the present "age of responsibility" is arbitrary. As a matter of fact, the present standard is borrowed from ancient English common law, which designated 21 as the minimum age for knighthood. (This was supposed to be the age which the young men would be strong enough to bear the weight of armor in battle.) Since we are dealing with arbitrary designations, why not choose the age that marks a definite turning point in a person's life—the usual age for graduation from high school?

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): How do you spell "knighthood"?

Hon. Mr. Davey: With a "k", honourable senator.

I will not go into the argument, which has been well put forward, about the legal rights of a person at 18 years of age, about what a person at 18 years of age can or cannot do. Instead, let me suggest that a person who is not ready to vote at 18 will likely not be ready at 21, will likely not be ready at 40, and probably will never be ready to vote. May I also remind honourable senators in passing that in elections we have consistently used 18-year olds, 19-year olds and 20-year olds with great success in election after election. They have been some of our best workers. Indeed, our respective parties have been pledged to the introduction of an 18-year old vote for a number of years. Almost eight years ago to this very day the then Leader of the Opposition, Lester Pearson, spoke strongly in support of such legislation. In that speech he suggested that the major arguments for proceeding with an 18-year old vote had