

“ . . . I imagine that the arguments which are now offered against extending the vote to 18 year olds are similar to those once offered against woman suffrage. I am sure it was once fashionable to argue, among young men, that women had no place in public affairs; that they did not know enough about political issues; and that, therefore, the franchise would be accorded to a group incapable of making intelligent choices and decisions. Experience has demonstrated that these fears were unfounded and I am confident that several years from now we shall see that similar fears were equally unfounded with regard to the voting ability of our 18 year olds. . . .”³

“The young people of this generation are better prepared educationally for political responsibility at the age of 18 than were the Americans of previous generations. We do not have very complete figures on the education of our population prior to the 1940 census, but even comparisons with the year 1940 tend to highlight

B. *Idealism and enthusiasm among youthful voters would have a beneficial influence on the conduct of government.*

“ . . . I think a vast new multitude of new voters, if it had any balancing effect on the electorate at all, would be an effect in the direction of more idealism and less cynicism in the decisions of government. . . .

“Unfortunately today there is a widespread apathy toward the problems of our unstable and abnormal world. It is too widespread an apathy even though public interest is picking up over what it was a quarter of a

³ Statement of former Senator Blair Moody, *supra* note 1.

our progress toward the preparation of our youth for civic responsibility. In 1940, 14.1 per cent of Americans completed high school; 4.6 per cent completed college. In 1950, 20.2 per cent of Americans completed high school, 6 per cent completed college. Also, the intensity of living for young people today is something that surely prepares them for mature political responsibility.”⁴

“ . . . The education resulting from the mandatory teaching of United States and world history, civics, government, and economics is often more evident at the time of graduation from high school and during the early years of college than in any other time in a person’s life. Added to this is the certain knowledge that a world of education is gained by many millions of young men through the medium of military service. These factors combined, provide a wealth of potential clear thinking voters who can and should assist the Nation in choosing its leadership.”⁵

century ago. Four years ago just a little over 50 per cent of America’s voters took part in the presidential election. Again in 1950, a so-called off-year election, less than half of the eligible electorate took the trouble to vote. It seems to me, therefore, that we can well use the spark and enthusiasm which our young people would contribute to the American political scene. We can well use the idealism

⁴ Statement of former Senator Hubert Humphrey, *supra* note 1.

⁵ Statement of Rufus H. Watson, National Legislative Director of AMVETS, *supra* note 1.