

with respect to the whole area of tax reform in Canada. There are many other areas, particularly affecting the individual taxpayer, where tax credits could be just as valid or more valid than they are in this legislation.

I would like to say to the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) that his version of speedy passage of this bill is not quite what I would have liked to have heard him say. This is where I must cast some doubts—I cannot say motives because that is unparliamentary—on how the governing party and the official opposition feel about this legislation in terms of its actuality being in force for the next federal election.

If those who have already spoken on this bill are dead serious about it, we will complete second reading of the bill by five o'clock tomorrow afternoon, complete the committee hearings by the end of next week, and finish third reading on about Tuesday of the following week, so that the bill will be the law of the land before July 31. On behalf of the NDP I wish to say that we will put up only two speakers on second reading of the bill, and we will speed up proceedings on the committee stage like you wouldn't believe.

In committee we will have some amendments to propose and we will put them to the vote; we won't bother making speeches. If the amendments are not acceptable to the committee we will propose them again at report stage, but again will not bother making speeches. I hope the same thing will apply to the other parties in this House so as to supply tangible evidence in support of what the spokesmen for the official opposition said a few minutes ago.

If that is done, this bill can soon be the law of the land. It will pass this House by July 23 or 25, can be passed by the other place by the end of July, so that it can be in effective operation in time for the next general election, even if that occurred this coming October or November. If that were to happen, then I will believe what the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East said tonight. But I will not believe his party's position unless that does happen. Neither will I believe the Liberal party's position on this unless that happens, although I believe what the President of the Privy Council had to say on the matter.

After at least 40 years of procrastination and delay, after a government commission under Mr. Barbeau, after two special parliamentary committees, after all the humming and hawing by hon. members opposite and to my right, and after 40 years of asking, pleading and demanding by people in this party, we have finally got some legislation that looks pretty good. Some of it may not work out. After experiencing one or two elections we may find that changes need to be made to it. But we in the NDP are prepared to support, vote for and pass this legislation with haste, not because of what is happening in some other country, but because of what has happened previously in our own country. And, even more important, because of what the people of this country are entitled to know and of what we expect them to do when they become involved in our national politics and in the activities and work of political parties and politicians.

Election Expenses

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, if we stop to analyse the aim of a bill such as the one before us this evening, we see it is to make elections more democratic.

In short, a bill of this kind should give us assurance that all voters can express their wishes more easily. With this aim in mind, we can criticize the bill in a positive or a negative manner but, I say once again, bearing in mind the desired goal, which is, first of all, to allow all Canadian voters to express themselves freely and secondly to give them the opportunity to learn about the ideologies espoused by the various political parties and candidates. That, in my view, is what we must aim for, when legislating on election expenses.

Mr. Speaker, if we ask ourselves whether the bill is adequate, with the aim I have just stated, at first glance I would be inclined to say that it still seems unnecessarily complicated.

We wonder why all these calculations, all this beating around the bush in order to have election expenses reimbursed at a certain time. In my view that complicates the matter tremendously, just to obtain a result which could have been obtained differently.

We are clearly in agreement on the first aim the bill, which is to limit election expenditures, but if there is one party that has had to suffer because of election funds, which has had to suffer the consequences of the expenditure of enormous sums of money by its opponents, it is ours, Mr. Speaker.

There was, therefore, an urgent need to incorporate measures in the bill so as to limit election expenditures. After some elections, we have been wondering whether the results were not a direct steam-rolling effect of the electoral fund rather than the explicit will of the electors.

This is why when dealing with restricted electoral expenses, we have an opportunity to provide the people with a more extensive democracy thus more freedom of choice. This procedure of providing the House with a representation exclusively dependent upon electoral funds must obviously be abolished. But if indeed undue propaganda or the influence of money should enable a candidate to get enough votes to win, this is not, in my opinion, a democracy nor freedom, but it is to mislead grossly the people.

● (2140)

The purpose of this bill is to restrict election expenses, and it appears perfect to me. Since 1962, my party has given evidence that it is possible to have elections while incurring a minimum of expenses. Elections have to be held and this is what we should aim at when considering such a bill; elections have to be held first and foremost according to an ideology and not according to the number of advertisements on TV, on radio or in newspapers. People have to decide which candidate or party they want to vote for, only after they have been acquainted with the political parties realistic proposals through the candidates of these various parties.

Therefore, we must consider first of all this principle that the vote must be given according to an ideology and, also according to the people's will. We must promote every