

On the question of disclosure I appreciate that there has been some suspicion by the public in respect of the way politicians act. I suggest that suspicion is totally unfounded. I suggest also that to some extent the control of the disclosure provisions may cause more harm to the government than the harm that non-disclosure is perhaps causing. I think the committee should look into the evidence of what bribery and corruption has taken place as a result of a non-disclosure, because one of the basic rights we have as Canadians is the right to privacy. When the wiretap bill was before this House the big argument of members of the New Democratic Party was that no one is entitled to peep into my room or listen to my phone. They were saying, and I support them, that the citizen has the right to be private. When I give money to my church I do not want to have spread out before the country exactly how much I gave. And I am not really interested in how much my neighbour gives. One of the things we fought for in this country for a long time, if we look back in history, was that a person could walk up on a platform and say that he voted for so and so. Then we brought in the secret ballot. To a large extent this question of disclosure of campaign funds is saying to the person who gives that no longer does he have a secret ballot. I appreciate that the public wants to be sure that there is no bribery or corruption, and that is good; but perhaps we can look into proposals whereby the returning officer would have the right to see the disclosure and the donation made, in the same way as the church treasurer does, but be sworn not to tell anybody else who made the donation in question. Let us have that kind of disclosure made to someone who is independent, so that if somebody wants to accuse someone of having been bribed, the evidence is there and can be subpoenaed into court, if necessary, to find out whether there has been dishonesty. Somewhere along the line we must consider very carefully whether the disclosure provisions are not of such a nature as to destroy the right that I have to vote without you, Mr. Speaker, or anyone else in this country knowing how I vote. That kind of thing is important. The confidentiality of the donor must be considered.

I come next to the question of the tax deductibility of donations. I think this is an excellent proposal. I am totally in favour of the tax credit proposal. This proposal is fair. It treats the man with a low income in the same fashion as it treats the wealthy person, because it is a write-off of tax of \$75 on \$100. This will encourage public participation. The provision says, in effect, that if you give \$100 to your political party it really costs you only \$25. That is good. It will encourage people to donate to the party of their choice. I say the effect of that is that the state, this government, is picking up 75 per cent of the cost of political activity in this country.

When the state picks up 75 per cent of the cost of political activity I suggest the state has done its share, that we must inquire very deeply into the validity of the suggestion that the state should further compensate candidates for the costs they have incurred during an election. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) on this point said that if you have 10 per cent of the public vote you should get your 16 cents free mailing and everything else. I say that he is again trying to get into the public trough. If 75 per cent of your campaign expenses are paid

by the state through income tax deductions, surely you do not need to get into the public trough any further.

Let us not have a situation where it is conceivable, with the 16 cents free mailing and so on, that a person could in fact make a profit as a result of running for election. I want to come to this question of making a profit from running for election and speak for a moment about what I think is the most ridiculous part of this bill. I refer to the provision whereby, regardless how many votes a candidate has—he can get one vote by voting for himself—he receives \$250. Under the Elections Act, with a deposit of \$200 a person can get his name on the ballot. In other words, a person could vote for himself, put up the \$200 and get back \$250. Is that not an intelligent proposal!

● (2130)

Some days ago a young man who was somewhat disturbed broke into the House of Commons. That young man ran against me in the last election. He is really a publicity hound. He likes publicity and he figures that the easiest way of getting publicity was to hand in \$200 to the returning officer, get 25 copies of the Canada Elections Act, 25 copies of the voters list, his share of free time on local radio, his share of free space in the newspapers, and his share of free time before any audience in the country. Now we have the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) saying to this nuisance candidate—and I say that advisedly—that he will be getting \$250 when it is all over.

What is the point of the \$200 deposit? What the President of the Privy Council should be doing is to increase the deposit required in view of the provisions of this act, with its juicy gifts which in fact encourage a great number of nuisance candidates and which do not increase the validity of a good democratic process at all. We must have an act that ensures that serious candidates are encouraged to run. We cannot have a situation where the act encouraged people just to put up their names, get publicity, and take advantage of some of the provisions in the act.

There are a number of other loopholes in this act. There is no control of pre-election expenses. There seems to be no control whatsoever over nomination advertising, even though nomination advertising may be done by the existing member who has a 100 per cent chance of winning the nomination. He can cover the riding with billboards advertising his nomination before the 29 day period. These are monster loopholes. If we are to make this act sensible, these loopholes must be plugged during the committee stage.

Basically, I think that the act is a good piece of legislation to go before the committee, but there is a great deal of work for the committee to do. I would like to see the committee get at it now and be in a position by the October 1 at the latest to report to the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.