

Canada Elections Act

into the next election with increased money muscles. We all know that they intend, or they want, to get this money by deducting union dues from the pockets of labourers who never had, or do or will support their movement, but at the same time this is the whole concept to which they are referring in this debate.

The hon. member who has just spoken stated that in the United Kingdom and in many of the provinces election expenses are limited. The fact is that such is not the case in Canada. Speaking for myself, Mr. Speaker, and I believe I can speak for many hon. members in this house, I appoint an agent to conduct my election campaign and look after election expenses. Therefore, unlike the hon. member for Port Arthur, I am relatively ignorant, as members of parliament should be, concerning my election expenses because agents are appointed, as we all know, in each and every constituency to handle that very matter. However, I believe that people all across the country realize, as do companies, that elections do cost money. The Liberals, in their sour grapes attitude not so long ago, criticized our very efficient advertising during the last two elections. I, for one, have no apologies to make about that very good advertising put forward by the Progressive Conservative party. We promised to take our message to the people, to bring government back to the people, and we did that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave): I point out to the hon. member that the principle of the bill involves the public filing of election expenses and campaign fund contributions.

Mr. Grafty: I realize that, Your Honour, but I do feel the principle of the bill involves indirectly what members opposite choose to call aspects of morality, and I feel I have to draw on this background material in order to come to the point. I realize that election donations, per se, given by companies are not deductible for taxation purposes as are bona fide charitable donations, and the donor of a charitable donation is allowed to remain anonymous. I believe we could apply the same standard of public morality to those individuals who want to give to political parties. I can say, that if I were able or I took the trouble to look at the list of people who made donations in my own constituency I would find that they were not people who had any axe to grind. They were people who donated to our party because they felt it was the best party in the interests of the nation and they gave that money with no strings attached.

So I say to hon. members opposite, with all the inferences they have drawn from a bill of this nature, what is to be gained? What is the purpose of the bill? I sound as if I am going round and round the point, but that is the point they brought up by inference, that they are putting this legislation on the floor of the house because of a moral consideration. But they hedge around this question. There are some people who unashamedly realize that elections cost a lot of money and they give to both parties. They are public spirited people who are realistic and realize in this day and age, with a small population and lengthy communications from coast to coast, that television, direct mail, motor transport, loud speakers and all these things which I do not need to repeat because all hon. members know they cost a lot of money. Certain people realize this and choose in the interest of their country and their party to donate. I fail to understand why hon. members opposite wish to attach what I call so many moral connotations to this legislation.

This is not a peculiar reaction, or perhaps I should say action, on the part of the C.C.F. party. I can only say that if this is the reason they are proposing this legislation, I am sorry they have this attitude, because if ever—and I underline “if ever”—they get all the union dues they wish to get from unwilling labour I hope they do not think labour’s attitude is a narrow one because it is not, because the labour attitude I have always run up against is one which recognizes the national interest as well as labour’s interest. But you would never know that by listening to hon. members opposite.

I also heard, both in the corridors and outside this house, that the C.C.F. are most interested in this bill. If they are that interested, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but wonder why not one of them is in the house at the present time. At any rate, I commend them for the bill they brought before this house last week. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say the same about either the draftsmanship or the spirit of the particular piece of legislation which we are considering at this present time.

Mr. E. J. Broome (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this bill I find myself in a certain amount of sympathy with both previous speakers. When the mover of this bill in his opening statement made the statement, that the publishing of the funds of political parties would make known the elements of society, if any, which are attempting to subvert political parties, I think he did himself and the bill an injustice. We all know that we require funds to operate political