

Election Expenses Bill

court to have the matter cleared up. I suggest we follow the wording in the committee's report.

Recommendation 38 would prevent a non-resident, including a union or a corporation, from contributing in any way to a political party or candidate. Section 36 of the Canada Elections Act prohibits non-residents of Canada from campaigning in Canada. We felt our recommendation was reasonable as an extension of that idea, and consistent with the long established principle that non-residents might not campaign in Canada.

In the select committee, we had good attendance and excellent co-operation. The committee worked hard for a long period. I suggest to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) that the House take advantage of the wealth of knowledge acquired by members who sat on that committee, and that the bill be referred to that committee, which could be reconstituted, for further consideration.

In conclusion, I should say I am pleased with the broad principles of the bill, and pleased that so many of our suggestions have been adopted. I hope that many of the ideas which have been put forward today will be incorporated in the measure during the committee stage and accepted by the House.

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, the objective of the bill we are discussing is to reduce election expenses which are borne by a candidate in a general election so that there will be the least possible obstacle in the way of a young man or woman with ability, but with limited means, who wishes to run for parliament. This is an objective with which we all agree, because it is a well known fact that parliament is only as good as the people who are elected to it, and to get the best we must make sure that we remove as many as possible of the difficulties which stand in the way of getting the best people elected.

One of these obstacles is the high cost of running an election, due to the increasing use of the costly medium of television and the sharp increases which have taken place in the cost of radio, direct mail and the many other forms of advertizing which are in popular use. Although I agree with the objective of this bill, I believe that the government has outlined an inadequate method of realizing this objective, and I would like to suggest what I believe to be a far better means of bringing about what we all have in mind.

We have just heard a speech by the chairman of the committee which considered this whole question of controlling election expenses. From him, we learn that the government has paid relatively little attention to the recommendations of that committee which obviously spent a great deal of time studying the whole subject and hearing witnesses. I believe the committee did a thoroughly good job of trying to come to a conclusion that would be beneficial to the government in drafting the bill that is before us. But obviously the government has paid very little attention to the recommendations of the committee, and therefore I endorse the suggestion the chairman of the committee has just urged upon the House, that is to send this bill back to committee for redrafting so we may

[Mr. Chappell.]

receive the sensible type of suggestions that the committee put forward for the consideration of the government.

• (1620)

I should like now to suggest what I believe to be a far better means of bringing about what we would like to do, which is to make it possible for young men and women with ability but limited means to be elected to this chamber. Even though the government did pay a great deal of attention to the recommendations of the committee that examined this whole question, I think on hearing the simple plan that I am about to put forward the members of the House of Commons will agree that it is a reasonable plan, one that would be easy to implement and which would work very satisfactorily in achieving the objective we all have in mind.

In looking for plans that would be useful to meet the needs of given situations, it is always helpful to examine what has been successfully done by others in similar circumstances. I have very carefully studied, and observed at first hand, the plan that has been used with great success for a number of years now in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom was faced with exactly the same problem that Canada is faced with today, but it overcame the problem by adopting a plan that placed a strict limitation upon the amount of money that a candidate was allowed to spend in an election, and enforced the restriction by carefully scrutinizing all election expenditure. If at the conclusion of an election it was found that a candidate had overspent the amount of money that the government allowed him to spend in an election campaign, his election to parliament was nullified.

The expenditure that is allowed in the United Kingdom is based on the number of electors in a riding. My experience from running in eight elections, six in urban ridings and two in mostly rural ridings, leads me to believe that the limit today in this country should be 10 cents per voter. That is the kind of limitation that would bring about the objective that we all have in mind and in the easiest and fairest way possible. Since the average riding in Canada has about 45,000 voters this would reduce the cost of running in an election in Canada to about \$4,500 per candidate. This would be a fair charge to a candidate and his party, and would be a very great reduction of the cost of running in most ridings today. National television, radio and newspaper advertising would, of course, be paid for by the national headquarters of each party on a basis that would be established by parliament.

Such a reduction in the cost of running in an election would bring about two very important improvements. First is the obvious one of making it possible for all good, potential candidates to stand for their party's nomination. The second is that all candidates would be required to do far more personal campaigning than they do today, and as they are required to do in Great Britain, since most means of campaigning that money makes available in this country today would not be open to them. Candidates would have to do a great deal more door-to-door campaigning and present themselves to the voter at many election meetings, where they would have to submit themselves to the questioning of the electorate and be judged on a much more fair and accurate basis than they are at the present time. Having made it possible for voters in this