

Election Expenses

Motion No. 7 "Canadian funds", and what he means by "Canadian sources"? Perhaps there was not sufficient research in respect of this matter. I know what the principle is behind the proposed motions, but I hesitate to vote in favour of something in respect of which there has been no interpretation. While I understand the intent of the words "Canadian funds" and "Canadian sources", my point is that if we accept this amendment we will be giving our approval to a principle which suggests something which is obvious to some but not obvious to me. This principle may be obvious to many hon. members, but it is not obvious to me in respect of the reference to the phrases "Canadian funds" and "Canadian sources".

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, after listening to the remarks of my hon. friend—

Mr. Alexander: I am serious, Frank.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is serious as he is not subject to facetious observations. I know the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) always displays a consistent degree of seriousness in respect of everything that takes place in this House. I should like to thank him, through you, for the fact that this matter was raised in the committee. Let me suggest that I have always found that when a person is confronted with a good idea but does not want to spell it out, he can always reverse the acceptability by pleading an ignorance for—

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Is the hon. member rising on a point of order?

Mr. Alexander: No, I rise on a question of privilege, and I refer specifically to the remarks of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard). All I asked for was some explanation in respect of the amendment proposed by the hon. member. He has taken the attitude that I am not serious in proposing questions in respect of this serious matter. I would hope that the motion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I do not think the hon. member has made out a question of privilege. Certainly he is objecting to the remarks of the hon. member, but if that is the extent of his question of privilege I do not think the Chair should entertain it.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Hamilton West and I have some difficulty in understanding each other, and I know that he is laughing.

Mr. Alexander: I am laughing.

● (2140)

Mr. Howard: What I was putting forward was that in the committee these amendments were proposed in these words. In the committee objection was taken to them. In the committee there was advanced the thought by some hon. members, who I shall not identify, that this was a good idea but they did not understand it and therefore would vote against it. That is what I was trying to get across to the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alex-

[Mr. Alexander.]

ander)—that some of his own colleagues found a refuge in ignorance. I was not trying to say to him that he was trying to find refuge in a question of misunderstanding. I was merely trying to relate what took place in the committee.

When drafting this motion I spoke to a gentleman in the Department of Justice. Perhaps I did the wrong thing. Perhaps I had too much faith in the ability of the Department of Justice to draft things to mean what they are supposed to mean. However, I called someone I knew there in respect of a lot of these amendments. I told him what our intent was. We had a conversation. This is how one goes about drafting legislation if one does not know legal phraseology. I told him what we wanted to impart in the bill. These are the words he gave me. He said that if we referred to Canadian funds that would be a designation that no one could misunderstand. Canadian funds are Canadian funds; they are not anything else. They are not United States funds, British funds or foreign currency or any other currency. I told this gentleman that we wanted to prohibit head offices of multinational corporations from making contributions to political parties, that we wanted to prohibit international unions headquartered in another country from making contributions to a political party and that we wanted to prohibit the bagman like Senator Hayes travelling to the United States, as apparently he did, seeking out contributions from headquarters offices of corporations which have subsidiaries in Canada. I told him that we wanted to knock out that possibility. These are the phrases and the words he gave me. The words "Canadian sources", "Canadian funds" and "directly from Canadian Funds" should not lend themselves to any misunderstanding unless the individual who seeks to find a misunderstanding wants to develop one for some other purpose. That is always possible in terms of statute law.

When laws have been passed, and when they have been presented before a judge for interpretation, we know how often the judge has said that surely Parliament did not mean this or something else because these words say thus and so. Sometimes when one is faced with what the court decides in a particular case and what was said in Parliament during the development of that law, one finds he is faced with two separate things. However, this is as close as it is possible to get to defining what we are talking about. I think it is completely understandable.

Another thing I was told about legislative drafting is that words are confining, restricting, and that the more words you use the more you restrict and confine what you are talking about; the more you attempt to spell out in precise detail, the more confusing and confounding you can become. This was the suggestion and advice we received in respect of our phrasing. I am sure the hon. member for Hamilton West has no difficulty in respect of understanding what we are trying to say. This is the advice I received. Even though members of the committee said this was a good idea but they do not understand it and would vote against it, I have not yet heard anyone suggest that it be phrased in some other way.

I do not think those members who said it was a good idea could phrase it in any more precise or clear way. We are trying to establish the principal point that Canadians should control Canadian policy in its domestic and indus-