

Election Expenses

On my own behalf, in respect of motion No. 29 I think it should not be proceeded with. Motion No. 32 is already withdrawn. I think if my suggestions are accepted, the next motion would be No. 33, which I believe should not be proceeded with. This is the subject matter on which I raised a point of order earlier on the question of the Governor General's recommendation in respect of the provision in the bill to which this proposed amendment relates. If we cannot proceed with that, this leaves me in the position of seeking to move notice of motion No. 34.

Mr. Speaker: I gather there is agreement, consent and advice, as the hon. member suggests, to withdraw motions Nos. 24 to 29 inclusive, and motion No. 33. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion No. 24 (Mr. Barnett) withdrawn.

Motion No. 25 (Mr. Knight) withdrawn.

Motion No. 26 (Mr. Peters) withdrawn.

Motion No. 27 (Mr. Benjamin) withdrawn.

Motion No. 28 (Mr. Barnett) withdrawn.

Motion Nos. 29 and 33 (Mr. Howard) withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: The next motion is No. 34.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena) moved:

That Bill C-203, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act, the Broadcasting Act and the Income Tax Act in respect of election expenses, be amended by deleting the words "twenty per cent" in subsection 63.1(1) of clause 10 and substituting therefor the words:

"seventy per cent"

He said: Mr. Speaker, the argument in support of this amendment has been engaged in on many occasions in the past, and from the suggestions put forward and conversations I have had outside this chamber it would appear that everyone expresses agreement with the logic of it. Therefore I will leave my remarks at that.

Mr. Speaker: Is the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) rising on a point of order?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order or to deal with the substance of the amendment. As hon. members will realize, clause 10 of the bill provides that in order to secure reimbursement of election expenses, a candidate must obtain a number of votes at least equal to 20 per cent of the number of valid votes cast in the electoral district.

The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) obviously has put down an ironic amendment to increase that figure to 70 per cent. A following amendment of the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) would reduce it to 10 per cent. In the proceedings of the committee on privileges and elections it was put forward by a number of hon. members that some readjustment ought to be made in respect of this figure. It was suggested that 15 per cent might be more appropriate. It was impossible to produce an amendment at that stage because the limit had been established in the royal recommendation from His Excellency. I undertook, as members of the committee will recall, to reconsider this point and, if a different decision were reached, to seek a further recommendation from His

[Mr. Howard.]

Excellency. I have since recommended that the number "20" be changed to "15".

I believe, Your Honour, there is a recommendation in your hands to that effect, so that it would be possible to move an amendment to reduce the 20 per cent to 15 per cent. That is authorized by the recommendation from His Excellency.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I want to say, in view of the remarks we have just heard from the President of the Privy Council, that my amendment No. 35, which is by no means ironic in intent, will be withdrawn. I shall not proceed with it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am advised by the President of the Privy Council that I have in my hand the amended royal recommendation. It is not apparent that it is here, but I assume that the recommendation has been obtained from His Excellency which makes it possible to move an amendment to the motion before us.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The Chair must take the minister's word for it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has a valid point; I have to take the minister's word for this. My understanding, also, is that the amended royal recommendation was to take into account the very valid point of order raised by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) a few days ago, so that eventually the House will be apprised of the terms of the amended recommendation. Is it my understanding that an amendment will be moved to the motion now before the House?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury):

That the figure "70 per cent" be reduced to "15 per cent."

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said amendment?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment carried on division.

Amendment (Mr. MacEachen) agreed to.

Motion No. 34 (Mr. Howard), as amended, agreed to.

● (1530)

Mr. Speaker: It is my understanding that motion No. 35 is dropped. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion No. 35 (Mr. Brewin) withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: Next is motion No. 36 in the name of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett).

Mr. Howard: I wonder if I could go through the same procedure which I used earlier, with respect to motions Nos. 36 and 37 standing in the name of the hon. member