

supplementary recommendation from the Governor General.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I suggest that any attempt to provide for a reimbursement formula that varies from the one in this bill would meet the charge that it constitutes a variation from the provisions of the bill itself. The minister knows very well that the development in procedural terms of the last few years, particularly since we have done away with the resolution stage, indicates that the form of the bill itself to which the Governor General has agreed, so far as its main contents are concerned, is the form that has been laid down, and that is what we cannot change.

Any attempt to make these kinds of major changes to the bill in committee would not get to first base. If we try to do this in committee the minister would be the first one, or Liberal members on the committee would be the first, to say that we cannot do that because we would be going beyond the terms of the bill laid down once and for all by the Governor General in his recommendation.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question? Can he show me where the Governor General's message or recommendation affects any of the proposals he has made? None of them affect the charge on the Crown; that is the critical point.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the minister amazes me. You know, he has such a good memory. Does he not know that when we have tried to argue that since there is no more resolution we are not necessarily limited by the terms of the Governor General's recommendation, we have been told that the measure before us is the measure we are considering and that we are considering only what has been recommended in "the present measure", to quote the royal recommendation.

Mr. MacEachen: Oh.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Please do not make those kinds of noises at me tonight. The minister knows better. We have been told that we are limited by "the present measure", and any attempt to get around that would be met with strong objection in the standing committee. Parliamentary counsel would be there—

Mr. MacEachen: Then how would it be possible to amend any bills in committee that are accompanied by recommendations? According to the hon. member's argument it would be impossible to amend any bill in committee, in any particular. That is the hon. member's position tonight.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is still possible to amend the bill in committee on details that do not change the basic principle. However, we are asking for a different principle; we are asking for the principle of effective control of election expenses.

Mr. MacEachen: That is just an opinion, not an amendment.

Election Expenses Bill

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We are saying that this bill does not control election expenses of parties at all and that it controls only some of the expenses of candidates. We are asking for the control of all expenses, both of candidates and of parties. In terms of disclosure, we are asking for things which could not be achieved by the process of trying to change the bill in committee.

Mr. MacEachen: That is nonsense.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Also, in our amendment we ask for the disclosure of contributions made between elections as well as at election time. I am sure, as sure as I stand here, that if we tried to move these amendments either in the standing committee or in committee of the whole, the first one on his feet saying that those amendments go beyond the terms of the bill as laid down and recommended by the Governor General would be the President of the Privy Council.

I am interested, of course, in noting that the President of the Privy Council did not raise the objection that was raised to the amendment moved last week by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), the objection that has been raised most often lately, that the amendment is partly in support of and partly opposed to the bill. We have made it clear, and I hope I have made it clear in my speech, that we are not as a group opposing the bill in part and then turning around and voting for it. We think the structure of the bill is basically wrong, and this is an amendment which proposes an alternative, one that is completely opposed to the bill as it stands.

Last Friday, Mr. Speaker, when you ruled on the amendment of the hon. member for Hillsborough you quoted some of the standard paragraphs dealing with the subject. May I quote in particular citation 382 of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition:

It is also competent to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill—

I interrupt myself to say that that is why I think these amendments are called reasoned amendments. We seek to give our reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of the bill. I continue:

—to move as an amendment to the question, a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill—

That is precisely what we are doing. We are approaching this bill with a different principle, with a different view of its policy and we are suggesting different provisions. We think that the bill before us, Bill C-211, is not adequate. We are opposed to it and we want to stop it now so that there may be a bill before us embracing a different principle, a different policy and different provisions that will more readily provide for effective control of election expenses.

Perhaps it was not necessary for me to mention this aspect of the matter because it is clear, from the non-reference to it by the President of the Privy Council, that our amendment is not faulty on that point. It is an amendment offered by members who are opposed to the bill. We have stated some of our reasons for being opposed to it and we have stated our desire for a different kind of policy.