

*Canada Elections Act*

serious problem in another part of the country. I certainly would not want to interpret what they said but I do feel that the very fact that they said it and that it has caused considerable discussion in that part of the country is a very good reason for members of the house to give serious consideration to this bill.

**Mr. Heward Graffey (Brome-Missisquoi):** Mr. Speaker, my first reaction is to refute the suggestion made on the floor of the house by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher). As a member of the house I do not like the aspersions he has cast on the part of the country from which I come. I do not feel that political morality in the province I happen to represent is in general any worse or better than in the rest of the country.

**Mr. Fisher:** On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Graffey:** I remind the hon. member for Port Arthur that I have the floor.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave):** Order. I would ask both gentlemen to resume their seats. The hon. member for Port Arthur is rising on a question of privilege.

**Mr. Fisher:** I did not, Mr. Speaker, accuse anybody or make any particular charges. I referred to the issues that had been raised by two other hon. gentlemen, and I certainly feel the hon. gentleman should recall his words charging me with casting these aspersions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McCleave):** I think the matter that the hon. gentlemen are discussing is more a matter of debate. I do not believe the words used by the hon. member are serious enough to justify the Chair requesting him to withdraw those words. They were strong words, perhaps, but not of the kind I feel the Chair should ask for withdrawal.

**Mr. Graffey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before entering into the merits of this particular bill I want to make quite clear the stand I should take, according to my point of view, after a remark of that nature.

Before, as I say, dealing with the merits of this particular bill I feel we should, once more, read the explanatory note. It reads:

The purpose of this bill is to provide that the central committee of political parties in Canada shall be required to file a return with the chief electoral officer showing the source—

I underline that word "source".

—and amounts of campaign fund contributions and to provide that such returns shall be laid before parliament.

I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that this is the second time within the space of approximately a week that hon. members have had

[Mr. Fisher.]

the opportunity of debating legislation introduced by members opposite concerning our electoral system. I should like at this time to make exactly the same remark as I made during last week's debate on absentee voting, namely that we are dealing with a very important aspect of our political life, our electoral laws. I feel that since we are doing that and since this particular matter relates in general to our electoral laws the matter should be taken seriously by all hon. members of the house. As I said before, and as I repeat now, our electoral laws—I hope I do not say this with too much self-satisfaction—within our parliamentary system are second to none within the western world.

I was very interested in noting that the hon. member for Port Arthur mentioned morality in discussing this particular bill, because I feel that is one thing which lies at the basis of this whole discussion. Often in this federal parliament we legislate on criminal law as such; often, Mr. Speaker, we legislate on what we might term administrative law; often I doubt the ability of a central, federal House of Commons to legislate on those matters which we might call morality per se. It is at this point I fundamentally differ with members of the C.C.F. party. I feel that every law involving morality should have a sanction, and if there is a sanction for this particular piece of legislation, I happen to think it only exists in their cynicism, in their forebodings and in their imagination.

The simple question I ask myself, as perhaps many other members do, is this: Why introduce this legislation? What has gone wrong in the past in so far as election expenses are concerned, in particular or in general, that they feel this legislation would rectify? Oh, we have heard inferences from this self-styled quasi-intellectual from Port Arthur, but not one particular complaint or general complaint has been made to give cause for the introduction of this legislation. I say it is typical of hon. members opposite that they try to see the worst in human nature. They look down at what they feel is the low estate of man, while I feel that our party, as well as many other parties in this house, have a little more faith in human nature. I put forward very generally, therefore, the very brief argument that on matters of semi-morality it is very difficult to legislate, especially after hearing the remarks of hon. members opposite and I, for one, fail to see any particular sanction for such a law.

I can say this right now. I well remember during the last session of this house when the hon. member for Port Arthur was discussing the radio bill he said, in a holier than thou spirit, that the C.C.F. party was going