

Election Expenses

and I see nothing in this bill which indicates that a donor has to reveal the source of his contributions.

There is a somewhat similar problem in the form of political advertising by people other than parties, candidates and their agents. This type of election campaigning is becoming more prevalent. In the last British Columbia provincial election, the BC Teachers Federation conducted a campaign directed, at least by implication, against the Social Credit party. Similarly, some insurance companies conducted advertising which was clearly directed against the NDP. Yet this bill makes no mention of this style of electioneering. If it is ignored, then yet another loophole is created whereby parties or individuals could subvert what is the wish of our party and of the Canadian people—fair and open election practices.

There are a few definitions in the bill that I would like to see clarified. On page 2 of the bill there is mention of volunteers, but what a volunteer is remains unclarified. It says that election expenses do not include volunteer labour. If a business or union wishes to send one of its employees on annual leave with pay, particularly because it is time for an election campaign, how are you going to prove that that person is or is not a volunteer? It is not clear from the bill.

There is another matter I would like to speak about in this respect, and that is government spending on advertisements. There are certain advantages to being in government. One of them seems to be that cabinet ministers can put out great advertisements advertising future programs. Invariably, these carry the name of the minister in large print and all too frequently a picture of him taken several years ago. The present government has shown the great advantage it enjoys in this respect, with cabinet ministers having their pictures in glossy brochures and with 17 defeated Grits invited to share a platform with Her Majesty the Queen. These are things that happen when you do not mention all the aspects of politics.

I believe it was said in the Watergate scandal that this is using the mechanics of government, the machinery of government to do in your opponents. I suggest that this is bad for the taxpayers. They are making unwitting contributions to the party in power. I should like to see an amendment to the bill that would prevent government advertisements from carrying cabinet ministers' names or pictures. If it is a welfare program that is going to look after little children, I do not see why the advertisement should be graced by a picture of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde).

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Or his children.

Mr. McKinnon: I don't know if he has any or not. Nor do I see why it needs to have anybody's name on it. It can be explained that the program comes from the Department of National Health and Welfare, and if the people are curious enough they will soon find out the minister's identity.

In the last election ministers started out with a tremendous advantage. It was a Liberal cabinet that brought the country to the brink of ruin, but it was the people in the back rows who did not get their pictures into the papers every day who lost out. My favourite advertisement showed a little cottage with an elderly couple in it and the

[Mr. McKinnon.]

rain falling on the roof. It indicated that they would be safe and warm with our new program of old age pensions and said pensions would be raised by something more than the 2 per cent by which they were raised the previous year.

Unfortunately, this bill is typical of the government in that it has a fine principle almost totally spoiled by a very bad drafting job. If you look through it, loophole after loophole is clearly evident. I do not see how it can work unless we have a serious look at it in committee. That committee now has two major pieces of legislation to deal with, and I do not see how it can give hasty attention to this bill if the bill is to serve the purposes that we all agree it should serve. I would hope that we will have sufficient time in committee to consider many amendments to the bill, and I would hope it will eventually come out of committee and be made the law of the land.

I expect that political parties will have a considerable amount of work to do in order to make this bill work. It will bring about a major change in the structure of Canadian political parties. As mentioned by one of my colleagues, the question of what will be done with the reimbursement of election funds is a very interesting one. I can see this creating quite a difference to the political strategy in a constituency. It says that the funds will be returned to the candidate. Whether the candidate will consider this as his personal property or not, I do not know. The amount involved in the constituency I have the honour to represent, Victoria, I think came to \$9,900. If the bill had been in effect, this would have been returned to me.

● (1740)

I would think it might well be put into a revolving fund to be available in the next election. Some parties may think it is up to the candidate to provide the money, and if he gets the critical 20 per cent he will get back the money he has invested in himself. I believe there is some merit in the involvement of people. Perhaps some Conservatives would feel left out of the action if they were not allowed to contribute. I do not come from a constituency that has big contributors but, rather, a great multitude of small contributors and I think their involvement gives them a lot of enjoyment.

I do not know if there are going to be limits to this. There is the concession in the way of the 75 per cent deductible from income tax. That is what it says in the bill. When I first read that, I thought they must mean taxable income and income tax. There is a great deal of difference between taxable income and income tax. If the bill goes through reading "income tax", I can see an astute political candidate—I might even do it myself—setting up an office beside H. & R. Block, the tax consultants, and possibly doing the smaller tax returns free of charge if they will agree to accept my advice on certain tax concessions that the new elections act gives them.

An hon. Member: Tremendous idea.

Mr. McKinnon: After all, if they gave me \$25 last time, I would not hesitate to point out that they could give \$100 this time and be out the same net amount. I thought it should be "taxable income" instead of "income tax". That