

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, May 4, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions.

[*Editor's Note: See today's Votes and Proceedings.*]

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ELECTORAL REFORM

FIFTH REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present the fifth report of the Special Committee on Electoral Reform for consideration by the House.

We are asking something very unusual. We are asking the government to come back to the House within 14 days with a set of amendments for consideration by the House so that we can have these suggested changes in law prior to the next federal general election.

Of considerable interest to the House will be our recommendation coming from Lortie that we have staggered closing hours at the polls which will relieve some of the tension in the country. We will not turn on our television sets and find out the election is over before they have even begun to count the ballots in certain parts of the country.

We have dealt with the issue of broadcasting allocation in a fair way that attends not only to history but to current realities of any particular election in a better way.

For the first time in Canadian history we are proposing an all-inclusive definition of spending. We are dividing it into direct and non-direct. We are covering off the famous issue of advertising for parties, candidates and others in a fair way, we believe.

We have always been concerned, and I think in a growing way, with the rights to candidacy for people. Those with responsibility for dependants including children sometimes have a difficult job being candidates. We are proposing a generous 75 per cent rebate for those kinds of care expenses. For people who seek candidacy in Canada and have a disability requiring special treatment there will be the same kind of reimbursement. We think it is fair. We think it is time. We think it is appropriate for the year 1993.

We as a House have finally responded to a long-standing request from the Chief Electoral Officer and the Lortie commission to take the enforcement issues and divide them into administrative law and criminal law instead of having a whole bunch of administrative matters falling under the criminal system. It will be less expensive, less traumatic, and missing a deadline will not have quite the same trauma attached to it as it has had historically. We think that is long overdue as well.

Some of my friends across the way will be interested to know that candidates who are elected as Independents will have tax receipting powers that continue from election to election. They will be treated in a manner analogous to parties with the same responsibilities as well as opportunity systems. I am seeing some nods on the other side. We hope that is the kind of change spoken to in terms of the debate on Bill C-114. We did pay attention and we are recommending it.