

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Milliken:** It may have helped. I am sure it was all—

**Mr. Murphy:** To make the hon. member from the Liberal Party feel good, yes, the legislation in Ontario which has been in place for some time now had been passed with the acceptance of all parties.

What I had done is basically taken that legislation, change it to reflect the federal situation and add a few categories where I believe we need some clarification.

The approach is basically this. We are saying that all amounts spent, all expenses and liabilities, including those related to opinion polls incurred for the purpose of promoting or opposing directly or indirectly during an election, "a particular registered party for the election of a particular candidate other than" must be included.

I have listed eight exceptions which I am sure all members of this House would agree on had they read the legislation prior to speaking in the House.

Here are some of the exemptions. First, things like the fees of auditors and accountants. We all agree that those should not be included in an election expense because they are basically fees that are required as a result of the election act to make sure that our books are in order.

Next, expenses incurred in holding a fund raising function. Next, expenses incurred for parties or advertising taking place after the close of an election. Most often those are thank you notes. Next, offices and equipment rentals for the purpose following the close of polls. Finally, the deposit of a candidate for nomination. These are certain things which should not be included in the definition of election expenses.

To be fair to all parties and all candidates, everything else should be included as an election expense. Then it is up to each of the parties and to each of the candidates to decide how they want to spend their money. So one does not create artificial areas where one spends money because it somehow is exempt under the election legislation. What we are saying is: "Let us treat everybody equally". If I decide to spend more money on canvassing and less money on radio, that is fair, that is a decision made by myself and my campaign. And we should include those amounts in the election expenses.

• (1710)

Some people who have been around in this House will recognize that the inclusion of polling is something new. Right now it is not included as an election expense despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent by each of the political parties on polling during an election campaign.

I think a definition which excludes one of the major components of all parties' campaigns is obviously a definition which is not accurate and which does not reflect the political reality of today. I think we could all guarantee that if there was not an election going on, this money would not have been spent. You can bet that Decima for the Conservatives or the other political polling units for the other parties would not be engaged in polling on a night by night basis if it was not for the fact that an election was going on.

We do know unfortunately that parties have changed their messages, their targeting of advertising and the communities that the leader visits on the basis of polling results. Unfortunately for some parties they basically changed their policies as a result of polling results.

For us to exclude polling and say that is not an election expense is to ignore the reality of today.

I would be the first to say that this legislation may not be perfect. But I remind the members of this House that this is private members' hour. I would ask them to look at the legislation and then allow it to go to a legislative committee because this was not one of the bills that was chosen for an automatic vote. That will not happen unless all members of this House agree. But we are not saying that this legislation must be passed. We are not saying that this legislation cannot be amended. And we are not saying that this legislation must come back to the House for third reading.

But what we are asking, and what I am asking specifically, is that the members of the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party and the other blocs and independents who are not here right now let it go forward. We ask to let it be examined and let us be in a position that regardless of what happens with the royal commission, we have the ability to examine one of the most fundamental parts of our election legislation.