

put forward by that party for consideration. These amendments were put forward by six or seven members of that party. Some of the amendments suggested were discussed during committee proceedings, and some of them were of such a nature that I would support them. I did support some of them during the committee proceedings, particularly the amendments in relation to the appointment of an electoral district agent. I supported that amendment because I felt it would increase the independence of individuals in the electoral district in this country.

It is common knowledge that the NDP is the party which has the most scandalous reputation of all parties in this country, but even that party has suggested amendments which are acceptable to many members of this Chamber. There are a number of other amendments that could be made to this government proposal and which might be acceptable to most members. In view of the fact there are now 42 amendments before the House for consideration, I hesitate to suggest additional changes, but as a member of the committee which considered this bill at some length I would suggest that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I would remind him of the directive of Mr. Speaker earlier today in respect of the number of amendments that have been proposed to this bill. Perhaps the hon. member has not had a chance to express the view he has in mind but, in accordance with the suggestion by Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the hon. member that he refer in his remarks to the general principles of the bill as embodied in the amendment before us at this time.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I should draw your attention to the fact that the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) has moved an amendment in respect of electoral district agents, to which I feel I have the right to refer. I do not wish to become involved in an argument with the hon. member who has spoken for the NDP, but I must point out that his suggested amendment would cause a dramatic change in the operation of this proposed measure. I would perhaps support his amendment, and I did so at the committee stage, but I should point out that members of the committee dealt with this matter on a very non-partisan basis.

The President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) has indicated that he intended to introduce a number of amendments to the bill, but decided not to do so in view of the amendments proposed by other hon. members. He indicated he was taking this attitude because of the recommendations made by the committee. For this same reason, amendments have not been proposed by several members of my party. We felt we should not spend too much time discussing this bill, but should pass it quickly. I hope the House will support the recommendations proposed by the committee, and, speaking for the party to which I belong, I suggest that we are in favour of this measure.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): It was refreshing, Mr. Speaker, to hear the comments of the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew (Mr. Dick), but unfortunately when you work with an hon. member in a committee you get to know him quite well; there is an informality and you

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become familiar with the hon. member to the extent that you know his first name. Perhaps that is an improper attitude to take, but the fact is that this is the basis upon which one works in committee.

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Mr. Dick: Lanark, Renfrew, Carleton.

Mr. Howard: In any event, it is refreshing to hear the comments from the hon. gentleman because, earlier this afternoon I listened to the official spokesman for the Conservative Party, the hon. member for Halton (Mr. O'Connor). I received the impression from his comments that, even though the bill was defective, was incomplete, was unsatisfactory, he and the Conservative Party were going to wrap their arms around it, embrace it and say it was the best possible measure that could be obtained so they would expedite its passage. I knew, of course, that there were members of the Conservative Party who did not hold that view because they had expressed their views earlier. I thought it would be passing strange if this group which classifies itself as the official opposition, the only party with an official leader, suddenly found itself engaged in a marriage of convenience with the Liberals and received nothing in return.

My friend from Hamilton West is again assisting me tremendously in the development of my thoughts. The hon. member for Halton earlier made what I thought were some unkind comments about myself and my position in respect of this bill. He made reference to the 20 per cent feature in the bill. Twenty per cent is the percentage of votes a candidate must receive before he is entitled to get any payment from the public purse for expenses. The hon. member for Halton tried to draw some conclusion from the fact that in the committee I had moved a motion, the effect of which would reduce that to 10 per cent, which is what I did. The motion was ruled out of order because it transgressed the recommendation of the Governor General in respect of expenditures. I now have an amendment which we will consider a little later to increase that to 70 per cent. The hon. member made some comments to the effect that I should pick up my marbles and go home and inferred "if you can't play it my way don't play at all".

I cannot follow the strange approach of the hon. member for Halton in respect of this situation. He does not seem to be able to draw the distinction between a member operating in committee, moving a motion in an attempt to present the position of his party, and a member acting in his capacity as a representative of his constituency in this House, which I am attempting to do. In case there is any doubt, I am against any payments out of the federal treasury to candidates.

Mr. O'Connor: Your first amendment would have increased the payment.

Mr. Howard: The hon. member for Halton, who made that comment, will have an opportunity, if he follows the rules to take part in this debate in a formal way instead of nattering away while remaining seated. I wanted to point out that we have a situation in which the official spokesman for the official opposition said in the House that his party is in love with this bill, in love with the Liberals, and will do everything they can to expedite the passage of