

Election Expenses Bill

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. Is the hon. President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) making a speech on the motion that is before the House, or is he rising on a point of order?

Mr. Peters: Anything at all!

Mr. MacEachen: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am just establishing my grounds for later on. The amendment is probably more deficient from a procedural point of view than the one proposed on Friday last by the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie). While the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre tried manfully and with considerable ingenuity to put his amendment within the four corners of the rules, he failed. And I am satisfied that he has not succeeded where the hon. member for Hillsborough failed.

We have in the amendment a series of opinions about this bill. They are all debatable propositions, a series of arguments. It seems to me that the flaw in the amendment is that every possible subject that has been covered by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and included in his amendment is a subject matter that could be dealt with in committee by an amendment to the bill.

The hon. member has talked about the limitation of expenditures by parties. We have provided for a form of limitation of election expenditures by political parties and the hon. member is free to move an amendment in committee to broaden that type of limitation. Likewise, with the question of disclosure: he is perfectly free and able in committee to amend the provision of the bill in a way which would bring about all the objectives he has in mind, if he can get the support of the committee. It is quite unnecessary to ask the government to present another bill.

What is the necessity of presenting another bill, Mr. Speaker? That vehicle is not necessary to achieve the hon. member's objectives. All he has to do in committee is to move amendments, because none of these proposed changes is hostile or declaratory of any principle opposed to the principle of the bill. The bill incorporates the principle of limitation of election expenses, it incorporates the principle of disclosure, and the other details are even less important than those I have mentioned. I refer to Beauchesne's Fourth Edition, citation 389 which reads:

A motion opposing the second reading of a bill must not anticipate amendments which may be moved in committee.

Every one of the proposals mentioned in this second reading amendment is a subject or amendment which may very well be moved in committee. On making a ruling on Friday last on the motion put forward by the hon. member for Hillsborough, the Chair quoted from May's Seventeenth Edition as follows:

The amendment must not be concerned in detail with the provisions of the bill upon which it is moved, nor anticipate amendments thereto which may be moved in committee; nor is it permissible to propose merely the addition of words to the question—

What is being done in this second reading amendment is merely to anticipate amendments that can easily be moved in committee. I suggest that it is unnecessary to go through the charade of suggesting that we need another bill. What the hon. member should do is prepare amendments, move them in committee and persuade other mem-

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

bers of the committee to accept them. Then the bill will come back in the form he wishes. Another bill is quite unnecessary.

I suggest it is even clearer today that this amendment is out of order, Mr. Speaker, than it was on Friday last when there was some doubt as to the regularity of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Hillsborough. In this case the amendment is out of order for the reasons I have mentioned.

• (2040)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy seeing the confidence with which the President of the Privy Council makes his little speech and says "That's it; the hon. member is out of order." The main point he seems to be trying to make tonight, since he cannot make the one he usually makes against second reading amendments, is that the changes I am suggesting can be achieved by amendments moved to the bill when it is in committee. Has the President of the Privy Council forgotten that this bill carries with it the Governor General's recommendation?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Conveniently forgotten!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Has he forgotten that when we deal with the bill in committee and bring forward our suggestions that we shall be told, as we have been told time and time again, what we can or cannot do to the bill; because what we can do to it is laid down once and for all by the terms of the resolution agreed to by His Excellency the Governor General? I suggest to you, Sir, that any attempt of mine in the standing committee or at any point in the progress of this bill to change it from one that imposes limitations on only an aspect of expenses to one that deals with the whole, broad gamut of expenses would be met with the argument, as has happened so often in the past—

Mr. MacEachen: Not at all. The recommendation does not affect any of those items, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Don't give us that nonsense.

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member knows it perfectly well.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The minister says I know this perfectly well.

Mr. MacEachen: You cannot show me any part of the recommendation which would have the effect the hon. member suggests.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We have been told time and again what happens when the Governor General provides the limits beyond which we cannot go. The minister himself, when he was minister of national health and welfare, well remembers that when he finally agreed that a certain kind of amendment should be made to the medicare bill, that that amendment which we put through but which has never been acted upon required a