

*Canada Elections Act*

our political system. It is not one which this party is prepared to accept.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** I want to make it very clear, particularly because the Minister of State (Mr. Cafik) made reference to it in his opening remarks, that the desire to have secrecy and to allow anonymity in contributions is not a desire of the all-party committee. It is not a desire of this party. I am sure it is not a desire of the New Democratic Party or the Social Credit party. It is simply a desire of the Liberal cabinet, who have changed the recommendation of the all-party committee for their own narrow political reasons.

We in this House of Commons decided, when the original legislation came before the House, that we wanted an open system. We want to let the sun shine in on the political process. We do not want shadowy figures and anonymous contributions. That was why we brought in the election expenses changes. We now see that the government of Canada, the Liberal party, is seizing the first opportunity to bring down the blinds, to introduce a little more secrecy into the system, to recreate a situation where contributions are made in the shadows and where suspicions arise regarding the political system. That is an unacceptable betrayal of the principles of the Election Expenses Act that were introduced and endorsed by members of all parties just a few years ago.

Clearly, that causes suspicion that there is only one reason why the government of Canada, the Liberal party, has introduced this amendment. The reason is that they are trying to find new ways to buy the next election in Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark:** I want to repeat three points. First, the fundamental one, is that the Progressive Conservative party believes that we must have an open political system. We want Canadians to know what their political figures and what their political parties are doing. We do not want secrecy. That is why we supported the Election Expenses Act in the first place. That is why we are so offended by this attempt to introduce secrecy, to bring back anonymous, shadowy contributors bringing their money in little brown bags in expectation of lord knows what kind of recognition by the party later. That is the first principle. We want an open system. The government party wants a system that is less open.

Second, flowing from that is the proposal of indexing which would cost the public treasury of Canada \$11 million. That proposal is not acceptable to this party, just as it was not acceptable to the all-party committee. Finally, the principle of allowing anonymous contributions to the political process in Canada is also not acceptable to this party.

● (1552)

I make it very clear to ministers on the other side that this is a matter of very real principle to us. We take seriously the fact that over the past several years there has grown up in Canada a deep, destructive suspicion of the political process. Canadi-

[Mr. Clark.]

ans are prepared to believe the worst about our political parties. The only way we can demonstrate that the system is open, that the system is honest, is to let the Canadian public see as much as possible of what is going on within the political system. That was the spirit in which the election expenses law was introduced. That is the spirit which the two cabinet additions to this bill today undermine and destroy.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order which is related to the point raised earlier today by the hon. member for Central Nova, who brought the rather alarming news to the attention of the members of this House of the existence of a bugging device in his office.

My point is as follows. This is not the first time that this issue has been raised. The hon. member for Yukon has in the past made a serious case about the possibility of wiretapping on his line. We now have confirmation by another respected member of the House that a bugging device has been found. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is as to what might conspire between now and, say, the next 24 hours.

If, indeed, the device which has been found by the hon. member for Central Nova is as he has described it—and none of us has any reason to doubt that at all—then those who are responsible for locating this device in the hon. member's office quite conceivably have put them in other members' offices, and during the next 24 hours it is quite conceivable that some attempt might be made to remove these devices from other members' offices.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I seriously suggest, on behalf of all hon. members, that through your office certain steps should be taken to—whatever word one uses—supervise or secure the offices of all members pending the time a check can be made of all members' offices to see if bugging devices are located elsewhere. I do not think it can be dismissed lightly at all.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. I wish to point out to the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby that Mr. Speaker noted this afternoon that he would take this matter under advisement and certainly look into it. Therefore, I will take the hon. member's suggestion right to the Speaker now.

**Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I should like, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, to outline some concerns we have about the bill which is before the House, the amendments to the Canada Elections Act. The act under which we are now governed was passed during the minority parliament of 1972 to 1974. It is an act that was long overdue in terms of bringing about needed reforms in the financing of candidates and their parties, and the disclosure of where these funds came from. I think it was no accident that this electoral reform was carried out when the New Democratic Party held the balance of power in the twenty-ninth parliament. It has always been a very long-standing and firm commitment on the part of our party that election reform was desperately needed in Canada to restore confidence in the democratic and electoral process.