

*Canada Elections Act*

to the raising of money to support his party, was something like a clergyman in a church. One point I felt like putting before Mr. Frost and which I think should have been put to Mackenzie King is that in a church they do pass the plate and usually at the end of the year they give an indication of where the money comes from.

Recently several newspapers, including that majestic morning paper in Toronto, have become concerned about the fact that our political parties, primarily the Conservative and Liberal parties from their point of view, do not have a broad enough financial base, and they have been campaigning for the Conservative and Liberal parties to set about securing for themselves a genuine base in terms of money in their membership and not to count upon the aid of large corporations which, as these papers have pointed out, could properly be considered as the kind of influence or commitment that it is not good to have in a democracy. We all observed with a great deal of humour, I think, except perhaps some of those involved, the situation of the Liberal party in the last provincial election in Ontario as to expenses when it was revealed that they were broke. They made much out of this fact saying that it was an indication that they were really a grass roots party because the corporations were no longer coming through and backing them.

If a political party must count upon secret donations of various kinds I think the thought will always remain in the minds of many people that there are possibilities of undue influence. I should like to say that in checking over all the expenses turned in in the last federal election I was much impressed with the returns from the province of British Columbia where there are certainly many indications not only from the totals of expenses but from the collection lists turned in by the candidates of all parties that they do try to treat the matter pretty fairly. One member from Vancouver who is in the chamber looked over these returns with me and I think we both agreed that there was a much greater tendency toward honesty in the reporting of such things in British Columbia. I think this sort of thing should permeate the whole political structure of Canada in every province.

I know I went into one constituency in Ontario and pointed out to some people at a public meeting that the elected member of parliament from that constituency, a very famous one by the way, had only declared total expenses amounting to \$3,400. That caused the best laugh I have ever drawn at any political meeting. They were in an uproar

at the very idea of this man ever carrying on a campaign for the meagre sum of \$3,400.

This is another indication of the general disrepute in which politicians and political parties tend to place themselves as long as they do not and are not prepared to give a clear and honest accounting of their election expenses and the sources of their funds. It is for that reason I should like to suggest to hon. members that they could well support this bill. Certainly it is one that could stand reference to the standing committee which is considering this act and planning to consider it in the future.

I certainly believe too that we should have a further expression of views by other members to indicate whether they agree with this idea. The question of putting more morality or, let us say, more honesty into political campaigning revolves to quite an extent around the whole question of money. There are many myths abroad in the land about where the money comes from and why people donate money, and I think this would tend to clear them up.

I would particularly like to point out to my Conservative friends that, with the volume of support they have enjoyed in the past two elections, they should have no fears or hesitation about their ability both to raise the money to fight a campaign without keeping the sources secret and also to keep within the limitations of that money and to account for the spending of it honestly. In north-western Ontario I have never heard any serious accusations flying back and forth between the parties about election money being used in a dishonest way. I wish I could say the same for other parts of the country. Yet at the same time I would hesitate to speak about other parts of the country. I might draw to the attention of some hon. members of the house who may not have noticed it that in 1956 two gentlemen of the clergy in Quebec came forward with a pamphlet that was very widely reprinted which indicated that in the province of Quebec there was certain electoral corruption and one manifestation of this electoral corruption was the use of election funds to bribe people to vote in a certain way and to indulge in that practice that I do not quite understand—

**Mr. Ricard:** What about St. Paul's riding?

**Mr. Fisher:** These gentlemen are raising issues on which I am not informed.

**Mr. Ricard:** Do not speak about them then.

**Mr. Fisher:** I am just referring to the fact that two worthy gentlemen of the clergy raised this matter, indicating that it was a