

*Canada Elections Act*

deal with the question of political abuse, scandal and political embarrassment, but is a revelation of something that it is our duty to clean up. This is a way to test the genuine determination of this parliament to clean up the situation revealed by the Dorion commission report. We have our opportunity in this parliament to make Canadian democracy healthier and more effective. I hope we will take it, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Basford:** Mr. Speaker, before the hon. member resumes his seat I wonder whether he would permit a question?

**Mr. Brewin:** Certainly.

**Mr. Basford:** My question to the hon. member is this. In view of the fact that Mr. Paddy Neale, who is the secretary-treasurer of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, informed me in the course of the last election campaign that the New Democratic party in British Columbia had for the first time in that campaign surreptitiously received \$20,000 from the United States headquarters of a United States union, would his bill cover the full reporting of that sort of contribution?

**Mr. Brewin:** It would cover the reporting of all contributions, Mr. Speaker. I know nothing of the facts of which the hon. member speaks, but this bill would certainly cover such a contribution. I can assure the hon. member that as far as my party is concerned we will not be the least ashamed of disclosing—as indeed we have disclosed to the committee—the full details of our campaign expenditures.

**Mr. Basford:** In view of that answer, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member can explain why Mr. Neale would say that, if I ever stated this as a fact, he would deny it.

**Mr. Brewin:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what Mr. Neale has said. I am not responsible for Mr. Neale and I do not know whether he said that. I do not propose to be dragged into answering a question regarding a statement I know nothing about.

**Mr. D. S. Macdonald (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has already made reference to the fact that a committee has been established to consider the question of election expenses, a committee made up in part by the former leader of the Socialist party in Canada. Therefore my first remark about the hon. member's bill

[Mr. Brewin.]

would be that surely the more intelligent approach to have followed would have been to await the observations which this committee will make.

**Mr. Brewin:** I dealt with the question of the committee.

**Mr. Macdonald:** I listened to the speech of the hon. member and it seemed to me that he did not deal adequately with that question. In my opinion the hon. member knew very well the weakness of his argument and was trying to justify his bill with a little broader reference. But surely, Mr. Speaker, it makes better sense to have a committee study in particular detail the practices of political parties in connection with campaign expenses, and before we enact legislation in this house we should have the report of the committee.

● (5:20 p.m.)

The hon. member has said that each member of this house, if he knows anything about any subject, is certainly aware of election campaign financing. In a limited sense that is true. However, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the hon. member that the committee has the advantage which no member of this house has, and it is an advantage that has not existed before. It is not only to make this investigation into what is involved in financing election campaigns, but that of having received very full statements from the representatives of all the parties in Canada as to the practices followed in this regard in this and other countries. I suggest really that, while remarks relevant to the principle of the bill may be made at this time, we should await the report of the committee before we attempt to enact legislation, especially when the bill has the imperfections which the hon. member's bill has.

I should like to touch on what I feel is one of the major shortcomings of the bill. Several of my colleagues have other observations to make on this point. The hon. member appears to have come to the same conclusion which is so often found in the press, that in some way there is something necessarily bad about a candidate making expenditures adequate to bring before the electors of his particular constituency his own background, and to bring before the electors the proposals for which his party is standing. Certainly there was a time when, theoretically, a man could run for office on a dollar. This was in the village pump days of Canadian politics and of politics in every democratic country. It was