

Adjournment Debate

rejected by the majority of members in this House and I believe that he too respects the decision of the House.

The motion raises two important questions. The first one is whether private individuals should be the only ones allowed to make contributions to federal parties. The Canada Elections Act sets no restriction as to the kind of person allowed to contribute to a registered political party, but prohibits contributions from foreign sources.

Therefore, except for foreign sources, any individual, corporation or union may contribute to a registered party. He wants to change this because in Quebec the law is different. I believe that this is not a good enough reason to change the federal legislation, especially since we are having no problem whatsoever with it.

This question has already been looked into in the past. The Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, in short the Lortie Commission, recommended against prohibiting contributions from corporations, unions and other organizations, except if they came from foreign sources. The commission's conclusion was based, first, on the role that historically organizations such as unions and corporations have played in the Canadian political process, and, second, the danger to divert to third parties funds which otherwise would have gone to political parties; and finally, the possibility that restrictions might be challenged under the Charter.

The second question was whether the contributions to political parties should be limited to \$5000. The hon. members will

have noticed that the Canada Elections Act sets no such limit. However, the Lortie Commission recommended against setting a limit on contributions to registered political parties because, as it said: "There is no compelling evidence that the number and value of important contributions may lead to influence peddling". Moreover, it would be extremely difficult to enforce such a limit.

While considering the two questions raised by the motion, the hon. members should bear in mind that the Canada Elections Act already contains numerous safeguards protecting our electoral system.

I am sorry that time does not allow me to explain what they are, but I am certain that if the hon. member attends the proceedings of the Standing Committee on procedure and House affairs when we review the Canada Elections Act in the near future, he will be able to hear a lot of explanations on this subject.

The Deputy Speaker: I will look into the question raised by the hon. parliamentary secretary and, if necessary, I will get back to the House on this point.

Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.42 p.m.)