

Election Expenses Bill

of the bill, I find myself in agreement with the basic principles and the framework; in fact I take pride that so much of our work was adopted. However, I seek improvement in some of the concepts and many of the details.

I support the principle of a contribution to the candidate who receives a certain percentage of the vote; the principle of limited tax relief to those who contribute in the form of a percentage tax credit. I support, too, the idea of making T.V. and radio available to all in order that each may spread his message and that charges for these services be held to the regular preferred rate. I support the principle of agency, which means that candidates and parties are fully responsible for the actions of their agents, and I support the principle that spending by candidates should be fully controlled. The bill, in its definition of election expenses, does not go far enough and I shall ask that it be strengthened and widened.

The Barbeau Committee recommended selective controls on advertising because it felt wider controls could not be enforced. We disagreed and came up with the idea that if each candidate were required to have his own accountant audit his report, the control would be effective. The bill follows the Barbeau report for controls on advertising only, and our recommendation for the audit.

The bill's definition of election expenses omits costs for hiring halls, campaign headquarters, paid workers, entertainment, refreshments, paid scrutineers and other items which in some ridings could constitute the majority of the expense.

Let me give two examples. A wealthy industrialist could call on perhaps 100 of his employees as paid canvassers and that would not come within the definition. In another riding, if a candidate had the support of labour and there was a strike on, he could call for 100 or 200 of the striking labourers to canvass for him and that would not come under expenses as described in the bill, but it would have been included in election expenses as described in the report. The report would prevent this by including in the definition of election expenses all time paid for directly or indirectly; the only time which would be omitted would be time some person contributed freely. In a riding consisting of small villages and towns, halls and lounges could be made available with entertainment and refreshment similar to that of drop-in centres, and these certainly would substantially affect the result of the election. Those expenses would not come within the definition of the bill, although they would come within the definition in the report. I submit that those expenses ought to be added to election expenses.

• (1600)

I do not support the concept that the names of donors should be disclosed to the public. As the law now stands, the official agent discloses the names of donors making donations which go through him. However, secrecy can be maintained easily by causing the donation to go through a nominee, usually the chairman of the riding association. He simply collects in private all those donations and then sends one large cheque to the official agent. Under this bill, all donations would have to go to the official agent. The result is that this bill, read with the present legislation—or, putting it another way, the legislation, as amend-

[Mr. Chappell.]

ed by this bill—would require every donation to a candidate to be identified by name; that is, it would require full disclosure.

Mr. Grills: How would you do it?

Mr. Chappell: We questioned each of the witnesses on disclosure of names, and concluded that names should be disclosed to the Minister of National Revenue for policing purposes but that they should not be disclosed to the public, because that would be counter-productive and donations would dry up.

Mr. Grills: But how would you do all this?

Mr. Chappell: The Barbeau committee report recommended that donations to parties should not be disclosed but that donations to candidates should be disclosed. We concluded that this would distort the balance between the party and the candidate, because some would feel that it was more appropriate to give donations to the party than to the candidate. We think this should not be allowed to happen. This distortion and upsetting of balance should not be allowed to take place. It would be useless to require the disclosure of donations over a certain amount, for example, \$100. Some in this House have made this argument. Such a requirement would be too easy to avoid. A man, by giving through his wife, could double his donation; by using his two children, he could quadruple it; if he were to use his friends and give through them, he might be able to give ten times as much as the law permits. Such action would simply bring the law into ridicule.

Mr. Grills: That is what this bill will do.

Mr. Chappell: In addition, disclosure of names would discourage giving because of possible community repercussions. One of the witnesses before the committee was an NDP member from Nova Scotia. He pointed out that if a list were published in small towns of those who had given donations, there would be embarrassment and resentment. I think many hon. members would agree with that.

Let us take, for example, the operator of a large garage in a small town. Suppose he gave \$100 to the Liberal, Conservative and NDP parties, and his donation was published. If, during the next election campaign, canvassers for each of the candidates were to go to him and ask for donations, I suggest that it would be only natural if he were to say, "All three of you can go away; you published my name as a donor, and I will not give to anybody." I have always marvelled that people who do not give, and generally those who want disclosure of names do not give, should request that donations of \$1, \$2, \$3 or \$5, which every good citizen should give to the candidate of his choice, shall be disclosed, and that we shall thereby breach the secrecy of the ballot, which is what would happen in effect. We hope to separate the basis of contribution, and that is why tax credits are to be preferred in this connection, rather than complete disclosure of all donations. If people were to give \$1, \$2, \$3 or \$5 on a wide basis, to many candidates, disclosing their names would be equivalent to disclosing whom they supported and how they voted.