

*Election Expenses*

would be much shorter than would otherwise be the case. In looking after this matter for our party, this is the proposal on which a number of us decided.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. member. I say God bless the hon. member for bringing in a sensible suggestion such as that. The only difficulty is that apparently it does not receive the approval of all the parties whose members will be taking part in the debate. If it were agreed that the opening speech from each of the four corners of the House would not be longer than 40 minutes, and that thereafter the rule of relevancy would be very strictly applied, the Chair would be most happy to put it to the House for acceptance. But if it is not agreed, we must follow the suggestion Mr. Speaker made. On the point of order raised by the hon. member, I will recognize the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen).

● (1640)

**Mr. MacEachen:** Your Honour, with respect to the proposal which has been made, that the first speaker for each group on this particular amendment might be given general latitude, I would certainly agree. The hon. member for Halton (Mr. O'Connor) might make a general statement on this amendment. I would, however, agree to this on the understanding that once we move from amendment No. 2 we should observe strictly the rule of relevancy as suggested by Your Honour earlier. When the third reading is before us, wider latitude will again be possible.

**Mr. Brewin:** As far as this party is concerned, we would agree. Our first speaker was the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard). He dealt with a precise motion; he did not make a general statement. So in a sense, by agreeing to this proposal we are depriving ourselves of an opportunity. Nevertheless, we shall agree.

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

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gilles Caouette (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, we too agree to the suggestion made by the hon. member on the condition that speeches on the amendments be really limited to the motion before us.

[*English*]

**Mr. Howard:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do not see how we can make deals with respect to the rules. The rules are to be enforced, that is all.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the suggestion by the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick), that the opening speakers from the four corners of the House be allotted 40 minutes, that thereafter the speeches to motions Nos. 2 and 30 be of 20 minutes' duration, and that on subsequent items at the report stage the rule of relevancy be strictly enforced.

The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) made the point that the hon. member for Skeena's contribution had been within the rules. I think that as an element of justice some latitude might be allowed as far as time is concerned when the next member from that party speaks. Perhaps he might be allowed to go somewhat beyond 20 minutes. Apart from that is there agreement on the 40 minutes and then the 20 minutes?

[Mr. Dick.]

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. O'Connor:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton for his suggestion and I thank the rest of the House for accepting it. May I apologize to Your Honour for rising to make a speech of this kind, but any problem which may have arisen seems now to have been resolved.

When I was interrupted I was speaking of the attitude of the New Democratic Party toward the passage of this bill. I was about to suggest that here we see the self-proclaimed, unctuous champions of reform stonewalling for reasons of their own. Well, Mr. Speaker, if the bill is delayed, the Canadian people will know where the responsibility lies.

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

**Mr. O'Connor:** One need only peruse some of their amendments to obtain an accurate appraisal of what is being attempted. Amendment No. 34 would raise the vote qualification enabling a candidate to obtain reimbursement of a part of his election expenses from 20 per cent to 70 per cent. The amendment stands in the name of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) who attempted unsuccessfully in committee to reduce—not increase—the qualification standard to 10 per cent. He is saying, apparently, that if he cannot have his way, no one else shall have theirs. If we do not play the game his way, he will take his marbles and go home. Ironically, under the hon. member's formula, in the unlikely event of its successful passage, it would seem the only candidate he wishes to receive any reimbursement is the hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) whom I am sure will be delighted with his new-found admirer. The hon. member for Crowfoot, I understand, is one of the only members who received more than 70 per cent of the votes in the last election. Politics does make the strangest bedfellows.

Amendments Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11 deal with the same section of the bill. They would all reduce the ceiling for party election expenses to three or four varying amounts. Are the great, self-proclaimed reformers of our electoral system, so long the lonely carriers of the light of revelation, now so confused that they are stumbling over each other in the darkness, a darkness which no doubt results from the ill-conceived energy policy they forced upon the government? Can the self-proclaimed reformers of our electoral system not get together among themselves and decide on an amount, thus reducing the problems of their making which now face the House? Or perhaps they do not wish to facilitate the passage of this legislation. I expect the latter is the case.

Mr. Speaker, the measure before us gives hon. members an opportunity to substantially improve the quality of the image of politicians and political parties in Canada. The bill takes large strides toward alleviating the long and deeply-held public suspicion—in some cases it is an actuality—that politicians are crooked, that the system operates on the basis of patronage, of favours, of jobs and other amenities offered and granted in return for candidate and party funding.

The bill will open up the books and records of parties and individuals through tough auditing requirements and