

Canada Elections Act

that is that the wife had taken directions from her husband to go out and commit an offence which in effect was adultery. This ordinarily would not have given the committee concern because the senators in the other place had heard the evidence and had made a finding after listening to the words of the wife and weighing all the evidence. But we were concerned and worried about this case because a child was involved. We therefore took the rather unusual course of simply holding up discussion in our committee until we could talk to the gentlemen of the other place who had seen the witnesses and had observed the demeanour, mien and conduct of the parties. We were reassured by them that they had made their finding only after the most anxious considerations and that they truly believed that the woman was telling a put-up story in making the defence that she made. With that information the committee was able to reach a decision.

To sum the matter up briefly, we went over a great number of points that had bothered us during the past two years during which I and other members of the committee have been seized of this rather difficult bit of business. We have taken up some points with these people and they have found out our problems and we have found out their problems. I think certain changes will be made in the rules of the other place so that in this business, dismal as it is—because it must come before parliament and cannot go elsewhere—the practice will be made a better practice.

SECOND READINGS—SENATE BILLS

Bill SD-349, for the relief of Charles Guy Comeau.—Mr. McCleave.

Bill SD-350, for the relief of Juanita Patricia Hamilton Long.—Mr. McCleave.

Bill SD-351, for the relief of Benjamin Gordon Davidson.—Mr. McCleave.

Bill SD-352, for the relief of Margaret Isabella MacKellar Thomas.—Mr. McCleave.

Bill SD-353, for the relief of Philip Joseph Kelly.—Mr. McCleave.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

AMENDMENT REQUIRING RETURNS SHOWING INCOME OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The house resumed, from Friday, March 13, consideration of the motion of Mr. Howard for the second reading of Bill No. C-17, to amend the Canada Elections Act (election expenses).

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, in resuming debate on this bill I should like to make the point that from a

[Mr. McCleave.]

personal point of view I have gone into the question of election expenses in considerable detail and I feel that this bill would serve a useful purpose. One of the things that rather shocks one in examining a present list of expenses, as they are set out in the returns made to the chief returning officer, is the tremendous variation in the totals of election expenses. The variations are so great that one cannot doubt that many of the returns are not a completely true picture of the election expenses. I can think of certain constituencies where one can only laugh at the returns that are given in so far as election expense totals are concerned. If this aspect of the election expenses is laughable,—as I think most hon. members will admit that it is—I think it is perhaps the most honest part of election expenses and election campaigns. The real intent of this bill is to get at the much larger expenses that are undertaken by the parties during the campaign, especially the expenses of the national organizations. I totalled all the expenses returned by the Conservative candidates and if you can believe the returns, which I suggest you cannot—I do not mean that as a reflection on the Conservative candidates; it is a reflection on all candidates—the total for Conservative candidates is pretty close to \$3 million. In the last campaign the Liberal candidates had less money and their total was around \$2 million. Those martyrs who fought for the C.C.F. declared total expenses of approximately \$600,000.

I must confess I was disappointed that so many candidates, including C.C.F. candidates, had not submitted election expense returns. I think this is another indication of the fact that they do not take the whole matter of election expenses seriously enough. The hon. member who introduced the bill had the intention of both the British Columbia legislation and the British legislation in mind where there are very definite limits, especially in Great Britain, on the amount of money that candidates and organizations can spend, and one gathers from the British press that there are no breaches, that this is honoured by the parties concerned.

It seems to me that one of the things that a true declaration of election expenses would reveal would be the basis of support of the political parties. I have been intrigued that several of our newspapers have become very concerned over the fact that no one really knows what are the sources of party funds. It was interesting that in the last Ontario provincial election Premier Frost, when queried on this point, took the same stand as Right Hon. Mackenzie King took years ago, that after all this was not something in which he had any interest. I believe Mr. Frost's words were that he, in relation