

Election Expenses

could name hundreds of companies doing business with various governments and which include in their contracts the percentage of the promotion costs of their business with the governments through electoral contributions.

Sacred candidates have never been influenced by contributions to electoral funds, and I must pay tribute to all the people who have been and are volunteers in the field of politics and who, in exchange for their voluntary help, are interested in politics for the common good and not for the promotion of personal objectives.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have proved, since 1962, that they could indulge in politics with a large "P", and I pay them a special tribute since they did not resort to any electoral fund, except for the traditional passing of the hat at our meetings, and we will continue to act as in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the famous fund raising dinners which have always been successful for old line parties to help them fill their electoral coffers. I recall in particular one of these dinners at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal where corporations and patronage seekers had bought tickets in advance, which was a sort of contribution, but since these corporations and many patronage seekers did not want to be identified with politics, they did not attend these banquets so they might say afterwards that they were not involved in politics. Well, during the few days preceding the dinner, in order to ensure full attendance, they had to find voluntary guests who would use the tickets paid by corporations so that there be one guest for each of the many tickets sold to those who contribute to electoral funds. I then happened to see a political party that had not enough guests rent buses and offer free transportation for community college and university students so that there be a sufficient number of guests. And the next day, in the newspapers, one could read: Last night 5,000 people attended the fund raising dinner of Mr. So and So.

• (1620)

Politics financed through election funds, Mr. Speaker, is nothing but an undemocratic show and if what the bill suggests is to be implemented, that is the limitation of election expenses, the following amendments to the bill will have to be brought in before I support it.

First, candidates of a recognized party should no longer be required to deposit any amount; second, polling stations officers and representatives of recognized parties in all polling stations should be paid by returning officers in their ridings, and they should be reimbursed by the government; third, the cost of limited advertising should be paid by the returning officer in the riding and reimbursed by the government; fourth, any advertising should cease a week before polling day.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have some remarks to make on that last point. It is unthinkable if the voters of this country are asked to make a serious decision in going out and choosing a government of their choice that during the week previous to polling day, radio stations and newspapers, television, behave as in a national circus, to do everything to keep people from thinking so they will make the least serious decision possible. They are getting pushed around and, as I said a few moments ago, propaganda worthy of the greatest and best international soap

[Mr. Rondeau.]

companies is going on to further party politics and detract Canadian voters from what has happened in their government administration in the last four years. That is why I say that any advertising should cease one week before polling day, and for all political parties, in order to allow voters to think and prepare to vote seriously.

Fifth, all recognized political parties, both old and new, should be equal before the law so as to eliminate all discrimination. Sixth, election day should be a statutory holiday. Seventh, we should draft a permanent electoral list in order to stop hanky-panky thus avoiding any preliminary work, list checking and greatly shortening the electoral campaign.

Eighth, we should prescribe the use of the identity card to ensure true democracy, not one in favour of election meddlers. Such card could be put at the disposal of civilians for many identification purposes or others.

Ninth, a \$5 maximum per polling station should be paid to the election agent of any candidate of a recognized party, so as to repay him, without any supporting documents, various costs such as rental of halls and loud-speakers; tenth, the CBC should provide equal minimum air time to all recognized political parties for their electoral campaign; eleventh, all those advantages should be granted to any candidate of a recognized party which gained at least 10 per cent of the vote.

Mr. Speaker, the twelfth and last recommendation is the following: the election should always take place on the first Monday in November, every four years, so that the voters in this country would know that they will have to cast their vote at a predetermined date. This way, the House of Commons would become more serious, with a less permanent election mood. This would allow us not only to improve our parliamentary status but also to improve our rules; also, the voters would be in a better position to judge the government on its management during the last four years and not only on promises or legislation introduced in the House in order to gain a great number of votes but which were not passed because it did not really want to do so.

I understand that the government party will not favour playing politics with the bill under study because it is always in a position to do political propaganda with its legislation since it will be facing elections at regular dates.

Mr. Speaker, I am upset to see that under clause 20, we will not restrict in any way an individual or a shareholder who may want to give money to a candidate. A shareholder can contribute any amount he wants and deduct these amounts from his income tax through the formula I explained a few minutes ago, because the bill says "any amount contributed" and not "all amounts contributed" during a taxation year. All amounts contributed must not exceed \$550 but it is possible to report many amounts contributed during a taxation year.

The bill amounts to eye-wash for the Canadian electorate, if it says that electoral expenses will be limited, but it has the good effect of helping some political parties with regards to their electoral funds.

Personally, Mr. Speaker, I would have preferred that no bill had been brought forward rather than the bill now before us, because we, in the Social Credit party cannot