

*Election Expenses Bill*

to the choice of the electorate on the day of the election. It is also due to the secondary circumstances of being a member of a particular political party. I often recall the words of a very respected town clerk in my native town of Napanee who in advising new council members said:

• (2130)

For many years I have listened to prospective candidates on nomination night saying that their friends had urged them to let their names stand for nomination in elections. Don't you believe a word of it. It is only the egotism and ambition of the individual that makes a man ask for nomination and for election.

That was true in the Napanee town council and all councils, and it is true in the House of Commons in Ottawa today. You raised yourselves up by your own bootstraps. Sometimes the party was a great help to you, and sometimes their help was a lesser factor. In 1968 Trudeaumania swept this country. It is not going to do so in 1972 or in 1973. There is every indication to back up the statement I have just made. Today's press carries headlines of million dollar bungles of the Trudeau government as shown in the Auditor General's report. Headlines also refer to parliament's control weakening.

A headline in a leading Liberal paper reads, "Who pays the bill for the flying PM?" All these headlines refer to a wasteful spending of the taxpayers' money by the Trudeau government. Today, instead of continuing with the budget debate, which would be the proper economic procedure, the government puts forward Bill C-211 that asks the House to condone and ratify more wasteful spending of the taxpayers' money by subsidizing the cost of candidates' campaigns from the public treasury. If that is not a waste of the taxpayers' money, then I have no business standing here and claiming to be the representative of the riding that elected me.

Although this bill has many clauses, I want to speak against it in only one respect at the present time. I oppose clause 11, that section which allows for the reimbursement by the taxpayer of candidates' expenditures. I heard my learned friend, the hon. member for Peel South (Mr. Chappell), who laboured conscientiously as chairman of the committee, tell the House that subsidies of candidates' expenses by the taxpayers would encourage men of small means to run for and be elected to parliament.

Does the government think that Parliament is the private preserve of the wealthy? Has the government taken a poll to find out what the individual wealth of our members is? I hope not, and I think not. I think that many of my predecessors were better endowed with this world's goods than I am. I have been through four elections, and this also applies to many of my contemporaries here. We are not too well endowed with this world's goods, yet we are here. I was elected each time, partly on borrowed money every cent of which, plus interest, I repaid later.

I am unalterably against the taxpayers of Canada and my constituents from Frontenac-Lennox and Addington paying any portion of my election expenses through legislation. Anyone who wishes of their own free will to cover part of my election expenses is welcome to do so and his contribution is appreciated, but to pass a law compelling people to subsidize the private political enterprise and ambitions of a candidate for parliament is something that I will not support.

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

This scheme perpetrates more Marxist socialism, in the phony guise of liberalism, on the taxpayers of this country. It also encourages triflers and opportunists. Instead of strengthening the old, two-party system which has been well tried and found valuable in the past and which now in 1972 is the four-party system, because of Mr. Pearson's bad dream of recognizing parties with a minimum of 12 candidates, this law will encourage the formation of more parties, which we can well do without in this House. It will also encourage more independent candidates because it will put more hands in the public till.

I urge the government to refer this bill to the committee and to strike out clause 11, section 63.1. I wish to put it on record for all of Canada to see. It will probably also be put on the record by other hon. members who agree with my stand. This clause is a government amendment to the old act, as is shown by the black, vertical line on either side of the clause. It reads as follows:

This amendment would authorize the Receiver General to partially reimburse candidates at an election who are elected or who obtain a number of votes equal to 20 per cent of the number of votes cast in the appropriate electoral district. The amount of the reimbursement would be based on the candidate's actual election expenses or authorized election expenses, whichever is the lesser amount, and in the case of certain electoral districts, on the candidate's travelling expenses. In any case, there would be a minimum reimbursement in the amount of \$250.

So almost without exception every candidate in every riding who received at least 20 per cent of the vote would be reimbursed to the extent of at least \$250. It is too much for the Canadian taxpayer to bear this kind of illegitimate expenditure. He has enough responsibility paying our salaries and the salaries of the gigantic civil service, as well as all the expenses that go with federal responsibilities, without having to subsidize the campaign expenditures of political candidates. If we pass the bill the way it is now, it would put socialism right in the polling booths; and I predict that if it passes it will perpetuate a system of corruption the like of which Canadians have never seen.

Mr. Speaker, you might deduce that I am trying to be altruistic in my approach to this matter, but I ask you this question on behalf of the Canadian people: Why should any Canadian citizen and taxpayer be asked to subsidize any part of my election expenses? They did not personally ask me to run. They did not ask me to incur any election expenses.

**Mr. Peters:** Were you parachuted in?

**Mr. Alkenbrack:** Certainly not. In fact, many men have run for office in the past without incurring expenses. I realize that those days are gone. But it is not necessary to incur expenses to be elected, if you have the confidence of a sufficient number of people. Basically, according to the electoral principle, the democratic principle, it is not necessary to make expenditures to be elected. I know that this is not possible today, but a candidate must look after himself. No one forced him to run, and no one should be forced to help underwrite his campaign expenses.

There is another point that I wish to make. This bill stultifies and threatens democratic initiative on the part of candidates. I will recount some incidents that could take place if this law is passed. The scene is the average small town where the candidate and/or his party are hold-