

Canada Elections Act

Mr. Lewis: It is no longer creeping socialism.

Mr. Woolliams: It is no longer creeping socialism. May I suggest to my good friend that it has now got to the stage of galloping socialism. So far as election expenses are concerned, you have got to look at how some of the parties in the past have organized their great machines. The socialists, I believe, had and still have—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The time allotted to the hon. member has expired.

Mr. J. E. Brown (Brantford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to commend the hon. member for York South for bringing the motion before the house at this time. The measures he has advocated in his motion are taken for granted in many European countries, as has already been pointed out. There is only one part of his motion that is contentious, but I am prepared to support it in its entirety. First of all, there is the specific proposal relating to expenditures in respect of television, radio and travel incurred by or on behalf of a candidate representing a federal party in a federal election. It is contended these expenses should be paid out of the general revenue. This part of the resolution is contentious, and I should like to let it stand for the moment and proceed with part (b), which reads:

That any additional expenditures by a candidate or by any person or organization on his behalf be limited to a specified amount calculated on the basis of voting population: and (c) that every candidate, constituency organization or federal party and any person or organization acting for or on behalf of any one or all of them shall make full and accurate disclosure of all moneys received and of all expenditures incurred by them in respect of a federal election.

There really is not very much argument left today in respect of these two items. This matter has already been dealt with in England as the mover of the resolution has stated. Back as far as 1888, again in 1918, 1928 and 1948, severe limitations were imposed by the law of the United Kingdom. This measure should have been introduced into Canadian law and would have been long before now except for various circumstances.

For example, the Hon. C. G. Power, a well known Liberal now sitting in the Senate of Canada, was pleading for a limitation on election expenses in 1939.

Mr. Lewis: What did his government do?

Mr. Brown: I will come to that if I have time. It is all right for the hon. member to make these remarks, but I should like to point out that the matter before us is serious indeed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I

[Mr. Woolliams.]

have a motion similar to the one proposed by the hon. gentleman, but mine goes even a little farther and was incorporated in the Liberal platform in the last election.

I was going to refer to the position taken by the Hon. C. G. Power back in 1939. Ten years later, in 1949, Mr. Power wrote an article in *Maclean's* magazine. He urged that a ceiling be placed, once and for all, upon the election expenses of candidates. The size of election expenses, he said, brings pressure for putting an end to the stupid and senseless federal election expenses of candidates. As a matter of fact, this measure of reform was introduced by Mr. Power in this parliament in 1938 and reintroduced in the session of 1939. It received extensive study in this house, and in committee, and was reported back to this house with approval and the recommendation that in the next session a bill be introduced. Before that bill could be introduced, the second world war commenced and this matter was pushed aside. It has not been discussed fully since. I think the hon. member must be commended for bringing it up now.

In England, the representation of the people act was passed in 1948 severely limiting the election expenses of candidates. In that connection, I may say that expenses of a candidate in a county constituency were limited to 450 pounds, together with an additional two pence for each entry in the register of parliamentary electors to be used at the election. In a borough constituency another ceiling was placed which made a sharp reduction in election expenses in 1948 as compared with the law of the United Kingdom as it existed before that date. The mother of parliaments, therefore, has taken a stand on this matter which is again before the Canadian House of Commons.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, it is high time that parliament seriously considered this matter. There have been articles in newspapers and magazines in Canada from year to year on this subject. Mr. Blair Fraser wrote an article in *Maclean's* magazine—I have not got the year—urging that an end be put to the present system; that it is antiquated. I believe, therefore, it is up to the government to bring forward legislation to limit the expenses. I will not make any further comment on it because I believe such a step is necessary and I will support it. The hon. member is to be commended for bringing this matter forward.

I should like to deal briefly with the part of his motion which states that certain election expenses should be paid for out of the national revenue of Canada. This is a rather contentious matter, I do admit. I gave the