

Mr. Blenkarn: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for wandering from the topic. In my preliminary remarks I wanted to commend the committee for the excellent job it did. I think the whole House should commend the committee for that. If I may deal with the particular amendments before us, I suggest that they represent a deathbed repentance on the part of the NDP: suddenly they realize that their total source of funding has been international unions.

Mr. Howard: Nonsense.

Mr. Blenkarn: These unions have their head offices in the United States. The subamendment goes a bit farther and alludes to trade unions which have offices in Canada. Sir, the location of the branch office does not matter. We are concerned about head offices. The intention of the amendment is clear and I am delighted to see this deathbed repentance. We have the New Democratic Party now declaring they will no longer rely on funds extracted by compulsory methods from workmen in other countries, as well as in this country, and used by the directors and union organizers largely responsible in a foreign jurisdiction demanding that political influence be felt outside their country.

● (1740)

Mr. Peters: Now we will use the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Blenkarn: I therefore commend the spirit of this amendment. However, I am afraid the mover of the amendment does not really appreciate the nature of the bill as it has been put before us by the committee. Under the bill there are financial inducements to individuals to contribute to political campaigns. It should no longer be necessary for big corporations and international unions to finance political parties. The Liberal Party has obviously been the party of international financing. They even send their bagmen across the line to collect.

Mr. Brewin: You do exactly the same, and you know it.

Mr. Blenkarn: There will no longer be the necessity for this kind of large collection system that we have had in the past. In dealing with the bill, the hon. member should realize that if you pay \$100, \$75 is a tax allowance, and so on, up to \$1,500 in personal donations. That should no longer make it necessary for us to worry about foreign control in election financing.

The amendment is really not necessary. I am sure that with a little bit of effort by the government House leader in negotiating with the movers and seconders of these amendments, they would see the reasoning behind the fact the amendments are no longer necessary because of the long and protracted committee hearings. A number of the amendments that are proposed were discussed in part in committee. Unfortunately, the mover and seconder of this amendment were not there and therefore do not understand how the whole nature of election financing was altered by the excellent work of the government House leader and the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) in the committee. If they would use their good offices and speak to the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) and others who have proposed amendments, I am sure they would understand that with the bill as now

Election Expenses

reported to the House, and the amendments and changes that the committee was able to effect after many, many hours, their amendments are no longer necessary. Unfortunately, there has not been that consultation. If there were an effort at agreement and at instructing the hon. member for Timiskaming and the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) as to the nature of the bill as reported to the House, they would very quickly see that this amendment in particular is redundant.

I now wish to deal with the subamendment. I do not want to bore the House and take extra time because it is unfair that we should do that. Usually these problems can be solved by understanding and negotiation. However, dealing with this subamendment we get into the question of defining who is a Canadian. That is one of the problems we have had with many pieces of legislation which have been before this House. We then go on to those who have landed immigrant status. Would they need to have landed immigrant status and never apply for citizenship, or have landed immigrant status for six years and if they do not apply for citizenship be deemed to be foreign?

That was the problem of Bill C-132 which was before us a short time ago. There is also the matter of the percentage of share ownership—50 per cent of voting stock. Hon. members will recall that when dealing with Bill C-132 we said it was control, not a question of per centage of stock. We went into that subject rather deeply. It may be the bill should provide for the kind of funds to be donated. I do not really think it matters whether it is Canadian currency or not. I suggest that is the only kind of money that can be donated to political party. However, we have the horrendous problem with regard to election funding whereby this amendment and the subamendment once again require us to define what is Canadian and what is not. Frankly, I am tired of legislation that tries to precisely define when a person who is a Canadian is a Canadian.

We have this problem in connection with the Elections Act. There are Canadians who, like my father, have been here almost since birth. My father came here from England when he was four years old. That was a long time before 1947; it was in 1904 to be exact. He will have to prove he is a Canadian. That is a disgraceful situation. It is one of the problems this government has yet to face. People always have to prove they are Canadian. This amendment is not necessary. The committee fully analysed the kind of financing which elections require. It has made a good arrangement whereby election expenses are deductible. There will no longer be the massive need of financing from foreign corporations or trade unions.

I again commend the NDP members who have reduced these amendments to a deathbed repentance, saying they will no longer have to rely on foreign money to fight their battles in Canada. I suggest this amendment to the bill as placed before the House by the Committee is no longer necessary and is redundant.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am more amazed all the time at the gyrations which go on in the Conservative Party about this question. Last night the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander*) raised a query about the amendments. The question had been raised in committee by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) and others in the Conservative Party about its