

Further, the prohibition against advertising during the first four weeks after the issuance of a writ now specifically includes a prohibition against the use of government publications. For reasons that escape me, Mr. Speaker, the committee turned down a reasonably restrictive definition covering a "government publication". I suspect that government members may regret that decision when they find during the next election that the undefined term may be considerably broader than that encompassed in the definition offered by the hon. member for Rocky Mountain.

Further, the bill now sets out specific procedures permitting one party to institute negotiations which must be responded to by the other registered parties to determine the allocation of broadcast time among them. The hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick) worked out a formula acceptable to a majority of the committee members. Similarly, amendments were introduced and passed to require a fairer, more even-handed adjudication by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission when deciding contentious issues between parties and broadcasters. Perhaps the most significant committee improvement was that establishing a commissioner, and I quote—
—whose duties, under supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer, shall be to insure that the provisions of the act in regard to election expenses, are complied with and enforced.

Although the commissioner does not take exactly the form envisaged by us, we are delighted that the important principle of his necessity was recognized by the committee and adopted. We feel the tenacious undertaking by the commissioner of his function as defined by the amendment is fundamental to the beneficial operation of many of the other sections of the act. To have left to candidates and parties a self-auditing role would have been folly. The hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) deserves commendation for the introduction of this worth-while concept.

I do not wish to denigrate the work of government members who also contributed substantially to the final result by proposing nearly one-third of the amendments passed by the committee. As much as anything, this fact establishes that even the usually intransigent thinkers opposite saw the need for improvement to the original bill.

Having sat for so long and considered so many divergent aspects of the bill, one would have thought that we would have perhaps exhausted the subject beyond resuscitation. However, one need only glance at the order paper for today and yesterday to see that in the minds of some at least the debate is far from over. One wonders whether the New Democratic Party is serious about electoral reform in this country at this time. Their lack of influence over the amended bill as it emerged from committee must indeed chagrin them in light of their all-persuasive influence over the government on most other matters.

However, the fact is—virtually all the matters raised by their 42 amendments were thoroughly discussed, debated and dealt with by the committee. They, of course, have every right to reintroduce these matters at this stage. But the real world of practical politics must surely point out to them, or they are more obtuse than is generally recognized, that the only purpose that could be served by such tactics is to delay the passage of the bill. Given the lead

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time necessary for effective application of the provisions of the bill, if it is delayed beyond Christmas they know there is little chance that it will be in effect for the next election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Chair is in difficulty. I think hon. members heard Mr. Speaker a few minutes before four o'clock dealing with allocation and relevance of the particular motions or proposed motions that would be debated. Most of the speech of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) was relevant in the sense that he dealt squarely with the deletion of certain words and substituting therefore "Her Majesty in right of Canada." The hon. member for Halton (Mr. O'Connor) has also in part dealt with that issue squarely. However, I would respectfully suggest to the hon. member that he is covering a much larger area and is really making what the Chair would have to regard as a third reading speech.

We are caught squarely within the particular motions that are being proposed. Our arguments must be directed to them. I know this will be a disappointment to hon. members. It will probably be a most frustrating exercise for the occupants of the chair if the debate is limited in this way. However, Mr. Speaker—and I certainly agree with him—suggested that we keep within the rules of relevancy because we have adopted a specific course of dealing with these particular proposals. I must ask the hon. member to consider the motion moved by the hon. member for Skeena as follows:

That Bill C-203 . . . be amended by deleting the words "a government, Crown corporation, or any other public agency." in paragraph (h) of the definition of "election expenses" in clause 2 and substituting the words:

"Her Majesty in right of Canada."

The hon. member must also consider the subsequent motion of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) which is practically to the same effect:

—deleting the word "governments" in paragraph 63(1)(e) and substituting the words: "Her Majesty in right of Canada"

That is the issue that has to be considered now. When we dispose of that we will go to other issues. There may be somewhat broader issues; however, it seems that this issue is rather precise. I hope hon. members who contribute to this debate will address themselves to whether this change should be made.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No point of order can arise from a ruling by the Chair.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, possibly my point of order could be heard before a ruling is made as to whether it is acceptable. It may well be out of order. Members of my party have discussed this matter. They want to keep the debate short and succinct, not taking 40 minutes on each amendment. It was recommended that our first speaker, the member who guided us through committee, make one general speech and the rest of us, when any other matter or any other amendment comes up, would make very short speeches, if any, because we would like to see this matter hurried through. I would ask the indulgence of the Chair so that we could co-operate in this way by having one general speech of perhaps some length, and any replies