

*Canada Elections Act*

last 20 years in the province of British Columbia which enacts what we are asking to be enacted nationally.

**Miss Aitken:** I do not know anything about British Columbia; I have enough to do here. But I do say that I do not think I should ask the Minister of Justice, because I believe it is an infringement against the bill of rights in the freedom of the press clause.

**Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena):** Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that the hon. member who has just resumed her seat, by her own admission says she does not know much about British Columbia, and I am sure that British Columbians throughout the province would be quite pleased to have her visit the province at any time. We would benefit by that visit and I am sure the hon. member would also.

**Miss Aitken:** Mr. Speaker, may I just say that when I said I did not know much about British Columbia I was referring to her laws, not to her beauties.

**Mr. Howard:** I am quite sure from that statement that the hon. member realizes it is the most beautiful province in our nation.

I listened very carefully to what the hon. member who has just concluded her remarks said about this bill, and I think it is extremely unfortunate that the two members who have spoken had to resort to innuendo type accusations about the motives of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) who introduced this bill.

There was the insinuation that it represented some desire to restrict the freedom of the press, to control people and to rigidly dominate them in some fascist type of way. This is, of course, just puerile silliness on the part of hon. members who use this type of argument which they know themselves is not valid. It is only designed to take up a bit of time so that we might not have to vote on this particular issue.

I can understand the views of the hon. member who just resumed her seat on this matter of public opinion polls and people who conduct public opinion polls, because of her very gentle affection and close relationship to an individual in Canada who participates in conducting this type of poll and who rigged a particular question at a poll in order to produce a particular answer and misinterpreted the results in order to prove a particular point. This was a misuse of a public opinion poll on the trading stamp issue, so I can understand what the hon. member says because of the gentle relationship which exists between her and this individual. I can understand that the hon. member would want to protect this sort of activity.

I do not know whether or not they realize it, but I also understood both hon. members who spoke to condemn themselves quite roundly for doing precisely the same sort of thing that they now accuse my hon. friend for Timiskaming of trying to do. I will use their words. I think they are the wrong words to use, but these hon. members used them in this application and so I will use them also.

During the last session both of them supported wholeheartedly the idea of the restriction of people's rights, the idea of restricting the freedom of the press, the idea of rigidly controlling when particular radio broadcasts should be made when it came to election results. If one looked at the Elections Act, which we reviewed and revised and spent many hours on in the privileges and elections committee, and if he looks at the revisions we made—some changes were necessary because some things had not been changed for years—he would find, for instance, if I may use this as an example, that on election day it is completely contrary to the Elections Act to broadcast the results of an election in the eastern part of Canada when, because of the time zone difference, the election has not been completed in the western part of Canada.

It is illegal to report that sort of thing until the results are finally in from British Columbia and all across the nation. This is a restriction on the freedom of the press. The hon. members supported it without any qualms or hesitation at that time. They have supported year after year, practically every time the Elections Act has been amended, and again last year, the provision that restricted the press and radio in regard to using radio broadcasting for political purposes for a certain period of time before election day. That is a restriction on the press and certain individuals who want to get across their point of view. This attitude that has been taken is just silly nonsense, as I said a moment ago, levelling these accusations at the hon. member for Timiskaming.

They also supported this new legislation last year that we should not use certain kinds of radio stations to broadcast election material. This was endorsed unanimously by this house. It was a restriction on the right of an individual to use a particular radio broadcasting or television station in a federal election in order to get across points of view to the public.

This house endorsed that legislation, including the two members who have just sat down. The use of posters in our election headquarters, the use of buttons, ribbons, and so on