

[Texte]

often in your discussion of events. There have been two elections since the Act was in force in Quebec. Do you feel that since the first election in 1966 the grounds for suspicion in the Province of Quebec that were added to on principle by election programs or contributions have diminished?

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Dr. Paltiel: Whatever evidence I have seen would lead one to believe that. Objective observers and newspapers and so on would—I see nothing to say that anyone feels that anything like the abuses of the fifties and the forties and the periods before that have occurred.

Mr. Howe: Of course, in the forties we had just come through a cost-plus program that was carried on during the war, and there were a tremendous number of abuses made of that 10 per cent cost-plus program that was brought forward. Some of the theories that had been developed and the practices that had been developed, I think, have disappeared to a great extent, by federal governments and by provincial governments, not through election programs but through the fact that tenders are being opened in public more today. Would you not agree with this?

Dr. Paltiel: I think this has actually aggravated the problem of the parties. I recall a number of candidates and members to whom we spoke during the time I was with the Committee who felt that the growing honesty, particularly at the federal level, has aggravated the problem for candidates at the local level, and the parties, in raising funds, and that this was one of the motivations. I do not know what was inside of the mind of Senator Lamontagne when he called for the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Elections. But I think that some of the material that was published around that time, and some of the people we spoke to, does bear out the fact that there was a feeling that the greater honesty of the tendering process—I think it is not so much that people have changed, but the fact that we run a much more complex society. We simply cannot run certain things in the old ways, and this has aggravated the problem of local candidates in raising funds.

Mr. Howe: By the same token, I have been a member of the government. I have been in opposition, and sometimes we felt when we were the government that it was more difficult to get assistance from the Ministers than it was when we were in opposition.

An hon. Member: That is right.

Mr. Howe: So by the same token a lot of the suspicions that you have with regard—and personally I...

Dr. Paltiel: May I just interject here? The suspicion is not mine only. This was expressed back in the—the term "mystery" was used by the Committee members. It was used I think by Senator Lamontagne when he set up the Committee. I think this is a phrase which is sort of, you know, common talk in Canada as a whole, not particularly mine. I am just quoting that.

Mr. Howe: Of course, there is a certain type of patronage that goes on where in a law office there are two lawyers, and one is a member of one major party and the

[Interprétation]

en vigueur. Croyez-vous que, depuis 1966, les motifs portant à douter ont diminué.

M. Paltiel: Tout porte à le croire. Les observateurs et les journaux le croiraient. Rien ne prouve que les abus des années 50 et 40 eussent été répétés.

M. Howe: Au cours des années 40, on a tenté de remédier à la situation en mettant en vigueur un nouveau programme; l'ancien programme avait été l'objet d'abus. Les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux ont tenté d'éliminer les anciennes façons de procéder en permettant à tous de présenter une soumission. Êtes-vous d'accord?

M. Paltiel: Je crois que cette façon de procéder a aggravé le problème des partis politiques. A l'époque où je faisais partie du Comité, des candidats et des députés m'ont dit que l'honnêteté du gouvernement fédéral avait aggravé le problème des candidats au niveau régional; de plus, les partis politiques ont beaucoup plus de difficulté à amasser des fonds. Je ne sais pas quelle a été l'idée du sénateur Lamontagne quand il a demandé la création du Comité consultatif sur les élections. Ce qui a été publié à l'époque et ce que les gens ont déclaré prouvent que le système voulait être plus équitable. Les gens n'ont pas changé, mais la société est plus complexe. Les anciennes méthodes sont dépassées et les candidats régionaux ont beaucoup plus de difficulté à amasser des fonds.

M. Howe: J'ai déjà été député. J'ai déjà fait partie de l'opposition. Il est parfois plus difficile d'obtenir l'aide des ministres quand on est au pouvoir que quand on est dans l'opposition.

Une voix: C'est exact.

M. Howe: Ce que vous soupçonnez...

M. Paltiel: Puis-je vous interrompre? Je ne suis pas le seul à avoir des soupçons. Les membres du Comité ont déjà employé le mot «mystère». Je crois même que c'est le sénateur Lamontagne qui l'a employé lors de la création du Comité. Je crois que c'est là un mot qu'on emploie très fréquemment au Canada. Je ne fais que le répéter.

M. Howe: Lorsque deux avocats partagent une étude et que l'un d'eux est membre du parti politique au pouvoir, ce dernier a beaucoup plus de chance d'être protégé.