

petitive committee rooms which are sometimes unnecessary. This competitive factor should be relieved to a large extent, but we do not want to see the competitive factor removed from politics. Rather, we want to remove the pressures to spend. All parties are more or less on an equal footing. I think all candidates are more or less on an equal footing, although we could quibble about that. There are limits but I think the limits are too high. In my constituency it could run to something in the neighbourhood of \$31,000. I think that is more than you should have to raise; but by the time of the next election, with the current rate of inflation that amount may not be too bad.

The reimbursement feature, about which I have mixed feelings, is rather modest but still leaves a gap so that the wealthier candidate can lay out \$10,000 or \$20,000 of his own money as long as he stays within the limits. However, while it is necessary for a candidate to go around raising money I think this provision will reduce the immense disparity which existed before. There was a danger of becoming involved in another competitive race in respect of the media, television, and our friends to the south. We were beginning to campaign using American tactics. I am sure this is interesting to many people, but in trying to do so we attempt to put on the greatest spectacle or activity that will look good on television.

● (1600)

We have not dealt with leadership conventions. This is another matter which the committee might want to consider. We now begin to see the escalation which can take place in this sort of operation of an election campaign. Regrettably, we see the almost inescapable consequences of that escalation. We do not want to take away any of the spontaneity, colour or fun aspect of an election campaign. It is important; it gives a campaign verve and vibrancy which most politicians enjoy as well as the people working with them.

In the last campaign in which I was involved, my opponent reported the largest sum ever reported in history in respect of a federal election. That was fair ball. He was playing within the rules and could well afford it. Initially I budgeted half the amount I eventually spent. I spent the budgeted amount early in the campaign. It had become obvious that I was being deluged with first-rate advertising and that there were committee rooms all over the place. I, my workers and those who wished to see me elected felt I was running into a very tough situation with that sort of competition. They were more than generous and we ran the campaign at double the initial amount that had been budgeted. I know that much was wasted. Much of the money was spent unnecessarily.

In the heat of an election campaign, when days are going by and the pressure builds, one finds it hard to resist the temptation to spend a large amount of money. I think that is unfortunate. When this occurs, a person is placed at a disadvantage or under a tremendous obligation to people who either have or have access to a great deal of money. It is interesting that with that high an expenditure all my workers were volunteers. Because I was interested in seeing who had spent more money than me in the election campaign, I placed a question on the order paper. I found that of the four highest spenders in the last election, three were defeated and the fourth had spent less than his

opponent whom he defeated. So it is not always the big money that wins.

Sometimes, however, the successful candidate is forced to spend money unnecessarily. I think in all our parties there are examples of very wealthy men who run for public office. I do not think that the fact they happen to be wealthy is a strike against them, but certainly their expenditures are not a factor in the sense that many notable people of wealth have run for office and lost. Nevertheless, the impression is around that it is a position for the wealthy. This impression, of course, must be eliminated.

This factor becomes more serious in present times when we hope to encourage more women to run for public office. In this parliament we are fortunate in having a number of attractive and extremely able women. I wish we had at least five times as many. It is sometimes easier for a man to raise money at the bank or by mortgaging his house. I suggest to hon. members that if their wives suggested that they mortgage the house to run for parliament, they might not go along with that. So this will give women a greater opportunity to compete in the political field.

As we look around this House we see there are very few wealthy men here. They are very able men, but they are not men of wealth. If they were wealthy when they came here, they usually are not after being here for a few years. Most members have given up a great deal more than they can obtain here or will end up with ultimately. Many, I believe, spend their first few years paying off the debts of their election campaign. This bill will relieve that pressure although it will not take it away completely.

I would have preferred to have run for parliament at least five years before I did, but I was aware of the experiences of many of my friends who had come to this House and had suffered terrible financial losses. I wanted to wait until I was sure I was in fairly good economic shape. I also wanted to wait until my children were grown up, because the cost of an election campaign is horrendous. Although you may or may not raise all the money yourself, you are responsible for all the expenditures. I know there are many men in this House of Commons who are still paying off the expenses of the most recent election.

A few weeks ago I wrote a column for the newspapers in my constituency, outlining therein seven points in which I was interested relating to election expenses. The first was a limit on the expenditure in respect of each voter in the riding. I placed it at 25 cents a voter. I thought that would be adequate. I am not arguing, however, at this time about the amount stipulated in the bill because I would like to give it more thought. One free mailing was the second point of the seven-point program. I hope it will be limited to one mailing, the same as radio and television time is being limited.

I appreciate the argument that so long as total expenditure is limited, the candidate is free to spend it in any way he wishes. One type of campaign works well in one part of the country or in one city, and works differently elsewhere. The third point is a matter which I hope the committee will think about seriously. It involves what is called the "you vote at" card. I do not think all candidates use it. This is a card that candidates frequently send out just before an election. It arrives at the voter's home one