

*Election Expenses*

that would create a problem under this bill. I should also like to read into the record something else that comes from the Committee for an Independent Canada, which has carried out a very interesting and, I believe, detailed study of this problem of political donations. Their suggestion on page 5 of this document is as follows:

On of the major reasons for a lack of public confidence in the Canadian electoral system is the suspicion that the political parties are individually influenced, if not controlled, by foreign—mainly American—forces. The implication in the public mind is that the political parties are thus not free to make policies that are in the best interest of Canada in those areas of Canadian life that are dominated by multinational corporations or American-controlled unions. To make donations to political parties from alien individuals and institutions illegal would help raise the credibility of the political system as a whole.

On that last statement I would rest my case in terms of this amendment. When I rose, I did so to criticize this amendment as being far too vague. I hope that these comments will encourage someone to introduce a subamendment to this particular clause which would perhaps better define Canadian sources. I do not have any problem in respect of Canadian funds, but I have a problem in trying to define what is a Canadian source. I think the judicial system would be caused considerable difficulty in this respect because it would be impossible to make a judgment, despite what my friends say about lawyers having difficulty here. I suggest that they have not looked carefully at this particular amendment.

**Mr. Thomas S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the debate on this question I found it really quite startling that there should be opposition from any quarter of this House to the acceptance of this amendment. There may be some uncertainty in the minds of some of the legal fraternity in this House despite the explanation given by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) last night concerning the assistance he had in drafting this motion. If there is uncertainty in their minds, I am sure the House would be prepared to consider a clarifying subamendment on this point by the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander). If such a subamendment made sense to a layman like myself, I would be very willing to support it if it clarified the objective which I think is quite clear in the terms of the amendment as it stands.

We hear a great deal from time to time in this House about the need to retain a Canadian identity. I think it is true to say that political parties in Canada which have evolved in the now more than 100 years since confederation have been, by and large, Canadian institutions. Despite all that, when one assesses some of the statements made about the funding of political parties, and when one considers the actual facts in respect of what has happened in our economy with particular reference perhaps to the period since World War II, I think members of this House should be prepared to take a good look at what we should have, in a legislative sense, to ensure that the political parties in Canada remain in fact Canadian institutions.

It is perhaps rather unfortunate that the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) is not in his seat today to make a contribution on this question. I am sure that if he were here he could bring the issues involved in this amendment into focus for members of the

[Mr. Leggatt.]

House much more eloquently than I can. In fact, those of us who have been members of this House for some time recall occasions when the right hon. member for Prince Albert was at his eloquent best on this very issue.

● (1550)

Some hon. members may recall the political storm which developed over the suggestion that the embassy of another country in our capital was not unconnected with certain events related to an election in Canada. That incident, the full facts of which were perhaps never determined to the entire satisfaction of all members of the House at least, should cause us to think about this matter while we have a bill of this sort before us. It is not very often that the House is seized with the question of the manner in which Canadian elections are financed, and the source of the funds contributed.

I heard one hon. member interject and ask what is wrong with getting foreign money into a Canadian election. Some people might be prepared to argue that money is money and that you get it where you can. One of my colleagues suggests there have been occasions on which Canadian money has gone south of our border to assist certain elections in the country there. I suppose that is primarily a matter of concern to the people of the United States, although it is not a practice which I would encourage because in my view too much money flows out of Canada for various reasons into the coffers of various bodies in the United States.

I think my colleague who suggested that there are times when our money has gone south would probably not disagree that the potential danger to the Canadian identity is much greater than any danger which might arise from a Canadian making a contribution to an election campaign in the United States. The duty of legislators, in so far as it is possible for us frail human beings to do so, is to project our minds into the future, particularly when we are considering legislation. Although I have no indication that there has been an intervention by nationals of another country, either individual or corporate, into Canadian elections to a degree which would be disastrous to our country, nevertheless that possibility does exist. We have examples, which I think are fairly well documented, of large corporations having moved in and interfered in the internal affairs of other countries.

In this connection, reference is often made to such corporations as ITT and the kind of influence it has had in various countries, particularly in the southern part of this hemisphere. Those interventions may not have been by way of making contributions of money to election campaigns, but some of them have involved substantial sums of money. According to some information I have with regard to ITT, those funds in some cases have been spent, not on influencing the democratic process of election, but, rather, to subvert the political process and the operation of the government of the country concerned.

I well recall a situation shortly after World War II, which was during the period I first became active in politics, when a very active and well financed campaign was being conducted by a political organization known as the communist party. Although I do not have any documentary proof, it is certainly my honest judgment that at