

Election Expenses Bill

of Union Carbide, which had received DREE grants of \$1,395,000; representatives of Canadian Johns-Manville, which had received a grant of \$307,000 from DREE; representatives of Falconbridge Nickel Mines, which had received \$4 million from DREE; and representatives of Noranda Mines, which along with its subsidiary Gaspé Copper Mines Limited had been favoured with DREE grants totalling more than \$4½ million.

There were others at those fund raising dinners who I am sure had not received DREE grants. I am not suggesting that the bagmen would request contributions in light of the DREE grants which were received, but I suggest that most political parties have friends who expect certain considerations from them.

I was not surprised the other day when the Liberal party refused to support our request to have representatives of the chain stores appear before a House of Commons committee to ascertain whether the huge profits they were making were exorbitant and whether they could be curtailed to the benefit of the consumer. I was not surprised that the Trudeau government did not see any merit in that suggestion. What surprised me, however, was that the Conservative party rejected the idea of investigating the chain stores.

This bears out the charge that is sometimes made, that the party in power receives large contributions from most corporations and the opposition receives contributions relative to the results of the polls and the expectations of people who under certain circumstances believe that insurance in this form must be taken out. In my opinion, this means there is always some pressure applied because of these contributions. I admit that in the New Democratic Party also there is interest in the funds that we receive, particularly the small donations. Quite often they are from old age pensioners or other persons who make a donation of \$5, which is a considerable donation and a hell of a lot more than a donation from Noranda Mines to the Liberal party in terms of what they get out of it and the amount they have to play with. They, in turn, expect some consideration from the party which they think has done them some good and which they hope will do them some good in the future.

I am sure most members of the House agree that there are a number of reasons, which are fairly well known, why election expenditures should be curtailed and kept to a minimum. There would be less and less influence bought through the support of a political party. This system is not unique to Canada but exists in every democratic country in the world. If we did not have a democratic system we would be operating under a system such as exists in the U.S.S.R., where the government pays their share of the expenses at the price of absolute control.

In all countries operating under the democratic system a close study has been made of ways to curtail these expenditures to the advantage of the democratic, electoral process and they have come up with controls which are not apparent in this bill. A committee has studied this matter. I understand that after a great deal of compromise its members unanimously agreed on a number of recommendations. This bill is quite insufficient in its treatment of those recommendations; many of them are not included within its provisions. Among the questions

that have to be considered is the limit to be placed on candidates' expenses. I think there is general agreement that the limits originally placed on candidates have been fair and reasonable, but the limitations stipulated in this bill for political parties will lead to great abuses.

• (1540)

What is foreseen here is completely the reverse of what happens in my political party. When calculating the budget for my riding on the basis of membership in our provincial organization, we agree that 20 per cent of all moneys raised should be transmitted to the provincial party. It in turn distributes money to the federal party if a federal election is involved. I understand this is the reverse of what happens in other parties.

In my own area the amount available is already fairly well known; in fact, one candidate used part of it for a nominating convention, I may say to the chagrin of other candidates. Just putting a limit on the amount of money raised by a candidate is useless if the money comes from outside a riding. This is particularly so if a candidate is defeated, because then those amounts will not have to be disclosed. Under the law, disclosure must be made by the elected candidate; there is no penalty for defeated candidates who do not file proper returns.

To my knowledge, a number of things have happened that are not covered by the provisions of this bill. During election campaigns you find government departments being used to do work for the party in power. Ralph Nader, the watchdog of the American consumer, has laid charges against several United States government departments, including the department of agriculture, for supporting a particular political party. In Canada I would probably select our Department of Agriculture because of the announcements it makes during election time.

This bill does nothing to control that situation. I point out that a number of government departments already operate automated typewriters, either singly or in banks. For example, message No. 7 is fed into a computer attached to the automated typewriters and they type personal letters to be mailed in accordance with a list of names and addresses. The body of those letters is made up of a pre-recorded message. Banked, automated telephones are also used for this purpose. A number of telephone numbers are fed into these banks and they use a pre-recorded message something like, "We are calling you, Mrs. Smith, because you are a housewife. We know you are concerned about the high cost of living. We want you to know that 'X' party is doing something about it. Thank you very much for allowing us to speak to you, Mrs. Smith." Such devices are not really a factor in Canada yet, but they are being used with devastating effect by political parties in the United States which can afford this type of operation.

There are many deficiencies in this bill. There must be an accounting system but it should not be through the Minister of National Revenue. The present minister may be a very trustworthy gentleman, but I will be surprised if he cannot find some use for the information that will be at his disposal. A minister in that portfolio could go down the list of all the corporations in Canada and if he found one that had not made a contribution to his party then I