

Canada Elections Act

compelled to give the names of all the firms that contribute to their campaign funds as well as the total amount of their campaign expenses, as it is the case for political parties that are financed almost exclusively through public subscriptions, by passing the hat at public meetings or coffee klatches.

Equality in this respect between small and large political parties would be a sign that hon. members really want to respect the equality of citizens in all of their acts during a democratic election in view of electing new members.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to ask the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) to answer us. He will find a way to make all political parties produce the names of the contributors to their campaign chests. Under a democratic system of government the election of members of Parliament by the people perhaps reflects the best the image of the people, because they choose their members amongst the very people who make up the nation.

In a democracy, the people choose their representatives from among themselves. Those elected automatically become the official representatives of authority. That is why all citizens should be better acquainted with their real power to choose their own representatives. That is also why electoral laws should give citizens every possibility to make the best possible choice of their future representatives. The Canada Elections Act should therefore do away with all practices that make it possible to exercise undue influence on the voters' will and that is why it is necessary to reveal the names of all those who contribute to elections funds covering advertising, canvassers and other election workers. There is no way of getting this information now as far as the major political parties are concerned, perhaps because our present legislation does not demand that it be revealed.

However, when one sees now the ministers behave towards some privileged groups, one is led to believe that these groups are involved in some way in election funds.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help noting the utter flexibility of our ministers in connection with their activities in the legislative field.

For instance, during the same week, allegedly to fight inflation, the government has proclaimed that no wages shall be increased by more than 6 per cent yearly and has decided to raise the minimum wage from \$1.25 to \$1.65 per hour, i.e. an increase of

about 33 per cent. Those are inconsistent measures.

In the past, the lists of Canadian Forces electors were always kept secret. Now, under the provisions of item 61, one may have a furtive glance at them. When you read item 62, however, you discover that this privilege is hereby cancelled.

It may seem odd, when all the lists of electors are made public, that every conceivable effort should be made to conceal the names of our gallant soldiers, ready to shed their blood for their fellow-countrymen.

Since the Valcartier base is located in the Portneuf riding—which I have the honour to represent—there are more than 500 military personnel entitled to cast their vote in Portneuf. Under the previous act, the lists of Canadian Forces electors were unavailable, even to the members of the House. And the election officer of the riding, who is one of my friends, made no bones about telling me: "I have the lists in a file but I am not entitled to let you see them."

It is quite all right to keep secret a list of 50 names, but questions should be asked when 500 names are concealed.

As a matter of fact, the ballot papers on which members of the armed forces are to vote change size, pattern and colour in the process. And the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) was a witness to the fact while attending a judiciary recount.

I do not know if that should be called a transcription or a transposition, but anyhow this method has already resulted in changing electoral results. I have in mind the case of the Sherbrooke riding during the June 1969 election. On election night, the Creditiste candidate was first elected but following the results of the military vote, he was beaten. When time came to recount the votes, the judge phoned Ottawa to obtain the list of Canadian Forces electors who were entitled to vote in Sherbrooke. But he was simply told: Your Honour, this is impossible, the list is confidential. The judge was being asked to pass judgment on a list of names he had not seen, and on ballots of a doubtful origin. I do not know whether this was done for honour or dishonour but, in any event, I doubt that this procedure was regular; I would even go so far as to say the Creditiste member for Sherbrooke may have been defeated by strangers.

Indeed a childhood friend of mine, still in the army and who lived in Portneuf at one