

report relating to broadcasting legislation and to the improvement of political communications.

The one point that is dealt with in a different way is whether there would be a separate act relating to election finances. As I understand the bill, it would make provision for that by amending the existing legislation. The special committee of the House of Commons had some 49 meetings and made some 52 recommendations. It heard from members of parliament of the provincial legislatures of Quebec and Nova Scotia where they have legislation of a similar nature. It also heard from experts in the field like Dr. Palteel, who has written a book on the subject and is especially knowledgeable on election expenses and electoral reform.

I should like to pay tribute to the chairman of that special committee, Mr. Hyliard Chappell, the former member for Peel South. Every member of parliament realizes how much effort goes into the preparation of a report by the chairman of the committee. This was certainly true of this committee report because of its very detailed and complicated work. There was a flood of recommendations of many types, and the chairman certainly did a tremendous amount of work in the preparation of the report on which many provisions of this bill are based.

The committee in its hearings gained some very distinct impressions from hearing from the various political parties, interested individuals, members of parliament, defeated candidates, professors, and from many groups throughout the country. Members of the committee gained the impression that the cost of elections is rising very rapidly, that the old campaign with party leaders travelling on trains is long gone. This is the jet age, and the cost of the national leaders' tours, the cost of signs—and the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Cafik) suggested this afternoon that signs should be banned because of the high cost—and the cost of television for a moment of advertising is thousands of dollars.

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The committee was also especially aware of the tremendous cost of campaigns, and its members, all being members of parliament, had a personal insight into those costs. There was concern that the average person, without bags of money or sponsorship by big unions or big business, could not successfully run for office. There was concern that the talented, dedicated person anxious to serve his or her country could not have a chance to run for public office, or if that person did run he or she could only do so with tremendous financial assistance.

Concern was expressed by the committee members that the costs incurred by political parties were escalating at a rate that was out of control, and the political parties, in submitting their briefs, indicated their tremendous concern. Attention was focussed on the belief that somehow or other we should get away from the idea of the political contribution being a back room operation, an under the table operation, something not quite respectable. Many people felt we should move towards the idea that a donation to a political party should be as acceptable as a donation to a church, to a charity, or to a community project.

Election Expenses

It is a matter of real concern to me personally that somehow or other people feel there is something not quite respectable about the political process in our country until you "make it", until you get elected. I feel that is wrong. If it is respectable for the man or woman once he or she is elected, then the whole process should be respectable—the organization, the committee work and so on.

We want to broaden the base of public participation in politics. We want to make it respectable not only to work for a political candidate but to make public donations of financial aid. An interesting example of the idea that is prevalent that politics is not quite respectable is that many school boards will allow a member of parliament to have meetings in one of their school buildings in his constituency, but they feel there is something not quite acceptable about a political party having a meeting in school buildings. I think we should move away from that idea. If the members of parliament, after they are elected, are completely acceptable, being the people who have the responsibility of representing other people, then I believe the whole process should be completely respectable.

Concern was expressed in the committee about the people money was raised from, how it was raised for political parties, the quantities that were raised, the control of these electoral funds, and what effect money was having on our whole democratic process. The process of reform in this area has now culminated in Bill C-203. It extends the proposals in Bill C-211 which was introduced a year ago last May and which had many substantial amendments made to it at the committee stage. It also fulfils a promise by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), soon after he was elected Prime Minister, that this was one area in which he wanted to see reform take place.

The bill puts a ceiling on expenditures both by candidates and by parties. For parties it amounts to some 30 cents per elector for each constituency in the country where a party runs candidates. For candidates it imposes an upper ceiling limit of about 66 cents per elector in a constituency. For example, in a constituency with about 30,000 electors there would be an upward limit on expenditures of about \$20,000.

The bill requires disclosure of donations to parties and to candidates of amounts over \$100. It opens up the books of the political parties. It gives a maximum tax credit for donations of \$500. However, this is balanced in favour of the small donor. The person donating up to \$100 gets a tax credit of 75 per cent of the amount of his donation.

The bill also provides assistance to candidates in the form of "You vote at" cards. This is a valuable contribution. Most candidates now send them out and it represents quite a cost to them. Often they are prepared in a very hurried way and there are errors. The poor elector may have two or three of these cards coming into his home, and if one is wrong and the other two are right this causes confusion. This will be eliminated in future because no more than one card will be sent out to each voter by the returning officer for the constituency.

The bill also provides for a cash contribution to candidates who receive over 20 per cent of the vote of some 16 cents for each elector up to the first 25,000, and 14 cents for each elector above 25,000. It also provides travelling expenses in large rural constituencies, and this represents