

plus the \$250, would give a total of \$6,350 of taxpayers' subsidy to one candidate.

I have tried to estimate the cost for candidates receiving 20 per cent of the vote in the constituencies across Canada. I made a conservative estimate that there would be an estimated equivalent of 2.5 candidates per constituency. I estimate that would cost the Canadian taxpayers, already burdened with more taxes than they can afford to pay, \$15,875 for the average constituency. Multiplied by 265, it amounts to more than \$4,200,000 that must be raised to subsidize the campaign expenses of the candidates. That is at least what it would cost the Canadian people if clause 11 became law. That is why I oppose it.

I said last year that this smacks of Marxist socialism. I have not changed my opinion since that time. It plays right into the hands of the New Democratic Party. If it had not been proposed at a time when the Liberals had a majority in this House, it would look like a concession to the NDP for their support over the past few months. While it may not be NDP socialism, it is certainly Liberal socialism. One is as bad as the other and ought not to be adopted.

I cannot go along with a law that would require my constituents in Frontenac-Lennox and Addington to subsidize the election campaign of NDP or Liberal candidates in British Columbia or Manitoba. I remind the House that the money will be collected from all across Canada. That is not fair to the electors. I do not want my constituents to pay higher taxes in order to support my election campaigns, either. I cannot support this bill as long as it contains that provision. This provision, along with the limitations that would be placed on the amount any candidate can spend on an election campaign, plays right into the hands of the NDP. For years they have complained about their difficulties in raising as much money for campaigns as their opponents. I have listened to that sympathetically. I know personally how difficult it is to raise even part of the money needed to fight an election campaign. This is understandable.

The main source of election expenses of the NDP appears to be the mandatory check-off against the salaries of unionized workers in industry. They take this money and at the same time condemn the employers of these workers as the enemies of the people. They say industries are villains, exploiters of the people and do not contribute anything worth while to society. The leader of the NDP refers to them as corporate bums. In a way, this is amusing. Without industry there would not be any workers paying money into the election coffers of the NDP.

Clause 11 of this bill further enhances the NDP income by a mandatory check-off of the taxpayers of Canada. The former check-off of the labour unions, money which flows to the NDP, plus the latter mandatory check-off of the taxpayers puts the NDP in a good financial position. It assures them of two major sources of ready cash, something which no other party in this House enjoys.

I am opposed to putting socialism in the polling booths. I am afraid this is what we will be doing if we go along with the proposal of using tax money to help candidates win seats in parliament. I know this is the way it is done in eastern European countries where governments are controlled by a small group of strongmen and where candi-

Election Expenses

dates for office are hand-picked and subsidized by the government. I do not believe we have anything to gain by importing such methods and using them in our election campaigns.

I said last year that this provision will encourage frivolous candidates who feel they do not have anything to lose by running for office. They will not have to build reputations in their constituencies or communities which would encourage people to support them for office. By polling 20 per cent of the votes cast, it would be possible for a candidate to make money in a campaign. As I stated, he could draw possibly \$6,350. He need not spend all that money; he could appropriate it. Even though he did not win a seat in the election, he could make a profit. I am sure all hon. members will agree that is an example of a frivolous candidate. It would actually be possible for a candidate to gain thereby. A candidate would be able in some cases to encourage a certain segment of the voters in a riding to vote for him or her and whether or not he or she was a serious candidate would be beside the point.

● (1700)

There is no need for this tax rip-off in order to ensure that this House does not become the private preserve of the wealthy. I am sure that is erroneous, a myth. This House is not the private preserve of the wealthy. It has been a very long time since most members of parliament were of independent means. That used to be the fact in the old days. But today we find that every trade, profession and occupation is represented in this House. That is a good thing; it reflects the sincere desires and in most cases the good judgment of Canadian people. Almost every sphere of human endeavour is represented here, and in our system of government that is the way it should be.

Unless government has some scheme for ensuring that only hand-picked candidates can be sure of winning an election campaign, then I cannot see any reason for trying to get the House to approve this measure. I am suspicious of this proposal in clause 11 because I cannot think of any reason it should be included in a bill that seeks to reform our election laws. The spending of more and more of the taxpayers' money, another \$4 million to \$5 million in this case, certainly is not reform but, rather, just the opposite. This is a gimmick of some sort and I am afraid we may not know what it really means until the bill is passed, and that might be too late.

It has been said that a person can get used to anything after a long enough time has passed, but I think it will take the Canadian taxpayers a very long time to get used to underwriting the expenses of future aspirants to public office. It goes too much against the grain and too much against the tradition which has existed so long in respect of running for office. I think it would be difficult in many cases for the voter to decide which of the five or six candidates are serious candidates. Under our present system it can be assumed that anyone who meets the requirements of the election laws and can acquire a sufficient following in a riding is a serious candidate. A candidate for office under our present system should be a person who can stand good for any unpaid bills as a result of a campaign. In many cases a deficit can be great enough to require that a person has a sound reputation and a sound credit rating in his or her community.