

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Mr. Howard (Skeena): This was also the case with the question of my friend from Battle River; it fell within the same category.

An hon. Member: Terrible!

Mr. Horner: Beware lest you fall into the same category.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I do not come from a farming background and I do not know a great deal about it from the point of view of people who have to farm for a living.

Mr. Forrestall: Where is your colleague? Where is the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave)?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): However, I know a fair amount about the fishing industry and the legislation of the Parliament of Canada in respect to the position of people engaged in it. There is a distinct parallel between farming activity and fishing activity, and from that standpoint I should like to say a few words.

I am sure there is not a farmer in this House who would not agree that the farmer is the one person in this economy who has not very large control over his income. He is trapped on both sides. Somebody else decides what he will pay for machinery, for services, for facilities, for equipment, for fuel and all the other commodities he needs to carry on. He has no authority and no control in that. The decision is made in the farm implement industry, the oil industry, the chemical industry. Whatever the farmer has to buy, someone else dictates what he shall pay for it.

He is in the same position when it comes to selling the commodities he produces. He has no control and no authority over what price he shall receive for them. Early this afternoon we talked about the position of the Kraft company with respect to the cheese industry. This company determines what it will pay to the dairy industry for its product which it turns into a junky kind of cheese.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): My friend says no, but I consider that Kraft makes a junky type of cheese. Taking Kraft just as one company, the farmer does not negotiate a price with it but takes what is offered. It has been indicated that if Kraft does not like a certain number of producers in an area, it buys them out. My friend can shake his head till it drops off, but I am telling the facts. Using that as an example, the farmer generally does not have any degree of authority in setting the price for which he sells his products. He is caught in a cost-price squeeze, and that is what we should be dealing with.

Mr. Horner: Ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

[Mr. Howard (Skeena).]

PUBLIC SERVICE—DISPLAYING OF POLITICAL POSTERS BY EMPLOYEES AT HOME OR ON PERSONAL PROPERTY

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, on November 26, I asked the government the following question:

Is the government contemplating any changes to the Public Service Employment Act which would make clear that a public servant is not contravening the act when he displays a political poster at his own home or on his own personal property?

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) answered:

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a question which cannot be answered in one word. I would be glad if the hon. gentleman would give me some of the circumstances.

The question I asked on that date arose out of a question which I had placed on the order paper on October 27, 1971, which read as follows:

Are public servants prohibited from displaying or allowing to be displayed a political poster on their personal property and, if so, under what authority?

The answer given by the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) was as follows:

I am informed by the Public Service Commission as follows:

Section 32 of the Public Service Employment Act provides that: Public servants may attend political meetings and may contribute money for the funds of a candidate for election or money for the funds of a political party. In addition, an employee may seek nomination as a candidate and be a candidate for election in a federal, provincial or territorial election, provided he is granted leave of absence without pay by the Public Service Commission for such purpose.

This section of the act, however, prohibits employees from engaging in any other type of work for, on behalf of or against a candidate for election of a political party.

• (10:00 p.m.)

This answer, I suggest, clearly indicates that it is against the Public Service Employment Act for a public servant in the employ of the Government of Canada to allow a political poster to be displayed at his home. My question on the order paper was placed there in the first place because of some incidents reported during provincial election campaigns this past summer. For instance, I have before me a Post Office circular to its employees which I was given in the city of Edmonton during the Alberta provincial election campaign. Points one and two set out prohibited political activity and permissible political activity. They are directly in line with the answer I was given to the question to which I referred a minute ago. It seems to me there is need for clarification regarding posters because some postal supervisors and others told employees to take down lawn posters from their homes because it was in contravention of the act.

I suggest the answer given to the question I asked maintains that civil servants cannot even say through political posters in or on their own property that they are for Joe Blow or whoever it may be. It might be argued that the erection of a poster is working for or against a candidate. If that is the case, a civil servant is contravening the act if he reveals to anyone who he is going to vote for. This is the logical conclusion which must be drawn if we say revelation of support through one way or another is working for or against a candidate.

This is an infringement of fundamental rights and liberties in Canada. In dealing with the problem I think we