

*Canada Elections Act*

Obviously, apartment houses are private places. To give someone the right to break in or enter private premises and wander the corridors and do the things that candidates or canvassers do in an election, knock on doors and disturb people and ask for a vote, to some extent is interfering with privacy. But it is an important interference of privacy. I think the House would agree that it is important.

The House would also agree that perhaps we do not have the right constitutionally to insist in the Canada Elections Act that we can break down the privacy of private property, as that property is within the jurisdictional confines of the provinces.

If, in bringing this Bill to committee, we find that we cannot go ahead with Clause 2, perhaps we can use the pressure of the House to persuade the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Alberta to extend the rights that other provinces have given people who are campaigning in federal elections.

I wish to point out that the Province of Alberta extends that permission to people who are campaigning in provincial elections, but not in federal elections. It would not be much of an extension to extend the benefit for federal elections.

The question of whether canvassers should be able to enter hotels is another matter that ought to be looked at very closely, and if people in hotels should even be enumerated. Normally hotels are places where people stay for a short period of time. There are certain requirements of being resident at the time an election is called, and actually being resident in the hotel and not just temporarily staying there. The question boils down to how is a hotel defined. Perhaps the Bill is deficient in that definition. Surely, it is not the right to enter any hotel. Surely, it is not the right to enter the Westin Hotel and wander up and down the halls knocking on every door and saying, "I want your vote". That hotel is there for people who come to this city to do business, and it is not a residential hotel where people stay week after week or month after month and use it as their permanent residence from which they will vote. There must be some definition work done on this Bill, or perhaps the word "hotel" removed from the Bill. Certainly, the committee can do that.

I do not wish to take up a great deal of time on the matter. I think it is good that the Hon. Member has brought the Bill to the House.

• (1720)

Turning to the section dealing with the special voting right, I think that matter has been before the House previously. Certainly it has been brought to the attention of the House by people studying the Canada Elections Act. Of course the question is: What about people travelling abroad or who are only temporarily abroad? It seems that to extend the voting ability to people who are just temporarily abroad would be most improper and most difficult. Perhaps proxy voting systems might better solve the problem. However, to have some provision where people could register their vote with an

embassy or consulate would seem to be very difficult, particularly people who are away from the country on holiday. Clearly people who are away on a long-term stay, temporarily no longer resident in Canada or staying outside Canada on a posting, ought to be given some special right to vote in our elections.

Having made those few comments, I commend the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap on a good Bill. I hope that it will go on to committee.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Madam Speaker, I would like to join the previous speaker in thanking the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), since the Bill is in his name, for introducing this Bill on October 6, which means we now have an opportunity to consider his Bill this evening.

Madam Speaker, we know it is only a matter of time, and I hope it will be very soon, before the Government tables Bill C-79, an Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts in relation thereto. First reading was on June 30, 1987, and I think the Government will be bringing in the Bill for second reading very shortly. I intend to take a very active interest in the proceedings when we consider this Bill.

Meanwhile, the Hon. Member has submitted a number of proposals to the House, and at first glance,—and with my experience of election campaigns, both my own and the campaigns of others, which should total about 100, with at least eight of my own—I believe there are a number of items here to which we can say yes immediately. I hope that if we do not reach some kind of agreement this evening, we will be able to reconsider the Hon. Member's suggestions when the Government brings in its own Bill very shortly.

I agree it is very annoying when you get people who arrive at the polling station on election day who, the day before, suddenly realized they were not on the voters' list. I must admit it is very frustrating, both for the elector and often for the political organizations who urged these people to get out and vote during the election campaign. But there is also the question whether this has to be left until the very last day, until election day.

It works all right in small urban centres and in rural areas. Then there is no problem. However, in our cities, many people would think twice about giving this kind of last chance to someone who comes in under the wire, at a time when everybody is busy processing hundreds of voters. Someone will have to decide who is and who is not a voter and swear them in. I think that would unduly delay the process and would also discourage some electors who are already on the list. However, I do feel positive about this proposal.

I know that Bill C-79, the Bill the Government intends to table very shortly, contains a reference to this problem, since so far, we can add electors to the list up to the seventeenth day before the election. I believe the Government is proposing in