

was some grievance which should be righted, some wrong that should be remedied. But evidently he has assumed that there is a disease somewhere in the body politic and he has brought forth what in his opinion is a remedy. But is there any disease? Has there been any wrongdoing? Has any harm been done by the method employed in regard to our newspaper work, our pamphleteering, our poster work, during the course of elections throughout Canada? I submit that no harm has been done in that regard. I have never heard the charge made; consequently I think it is absolutely unnecessary to place such a clause in our election law, at all events at the present time.

There is another thing about it; such an amendment might have the effect of abridging what is an undoubted private right at the present time. I can imagine that there are very able men who are too modest to put their opinions before the public under their own names, too modest to go on platforms and discuss political questions; who for their own private reasons do not desire their names to be made public, but still do desire to take part in elections. Surely these men are entitled to print pamphlets at their own expense and to circulate them as fully as they deem proper. Would that be wrong? Does the name matter, after all? Is it not the article; is it not the reasoning; is it not the argument that counts, rather than the name of the individual? I suppose the strongest political pamphleteering that ever was carried out was done anonymously. I question whether any one knows to-day who wrote the Letters of Junius, which were published anonymously. They may have been written by a great man, or by a man in modest, humble circumstances, but they certainly were effective. Why not permit such a system? I can well understand, too, that a man, through apprehension of trouble, perhaps through motives of fear, may desire to issue a statement of his views upon public questions without submitting his name. I heard of one case of an employee who desired to circulate as part of his political propaganda some of the writings of Henry George and of Karl Marx, but was afraid to do it under his own name. He should have the right to do that if he sees fit; nor should his position be jeopardized if he merely desires to lay his opinion before the public. I cannot imagine how a wrong can be done under the present system. I cannot imagine what wrong my hon. friend seeks to remedy. If the House desired to do something of the kind I think

[Mr. Guthrie.]

it might more intelligently have dealt with the proposal, but for my part, speaking in this instance on behalf of my colleagues, whom I have consulted, I think that under the present circumstances in this country it is wholly unnecessary to inflict upon the private person, the firm, the corporation,—upon anybody—the necessity of exposing who has paid for or who has written a political document. I repeat that it is the document that counts, not the writer; it is the argument that will weigh, not the personality of the man. If my hon. friend wanted to do a real service he would insist that every newspaper article, every newspaper editorial, should be signed, as is done in France, I believe. That might convey to us some information. No man in the House has a greater respect for the press than I have. I read it. I hope that it may have widest and broadest circulation, but I am sometimes bound to confess that it would be better for the public if, when some hon. member quotes in this House from an editorial appearing in the Morning Glory out West or the Evening Howler down East, we knew that the writer of the article was a clerk drawing a salary of \$15 or \$20 a week. But we do not know that; we take the argument as it is written. It has the authority of a newspaper, but it must stand or fall by its own merits. I see no reason for the adoption of this provision, and I ask the House to vote it down.

Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (leader of the Opposition): I am somewhat astonished at the remarks of my hon. friend, (Mr. Guthrie). He says that he has studied this amendment somewhat carefully and has submitted it to the Government for consideration. As hon. members will have observed, the burden of his remarks was directed against what he said was an injustice to modest men. He said that many men would like to give their views at election time but would be too modest to put their names to those views as published. He remarked that the greatest pamphleteering that had been done had been done anonymously, and he cited in that connection the Letters of Junius. Well, there is absolutely nothing in the amendment proposed by my hon. friend from Brome (Mr. McMaster)—which as my hon. friend has mentioned, is an amendment I suggested in committee the other day—which relates in any way to disclosing the name of any person who has written any political article. The amendment has nothing to do with the writing