

Election Expenses

This party in the province of British Columbia consistently refused to report to its own membership at its annual conventions what moneys it took in for the purpose of an election campaign and what moneys it dispensed in the pursuit of the election campaign. So political parties have not been required to disclose to their supporters, or to anybody, their election expenses and I have pointed out one instance in which a party would not even disclose what was going on to its own members. There were two sets of books involved and only the leader of their party knew where the other set of books was. Nobody else in the organization knew anything at all about it. However, Professor Paltiel, insofar as the federal parties are concerned—in fact he mentions it in his paper—wishes to express thanks and appreciation to various executive officers of the particular parties for the information with which they provided him. This is in reference No. 5 on page 34 of that paper. It is important that I quote him so that we understand what we are trying to do in terms of election expenses. He writes:

● (1600)

The author wishes to thank numerous Liberal, Progressive Conservative, and New Democratic Party officials for their generous help in the preparation of this paper and accompanying studies. In particular he is grateful to John M. Godfrey, Q.C., chairman of the treasury committee and Blair Williams, national director of the Liberal Party of Canada.

I am told by my colleagues who know that area of Canada fairly well that the name of John M. Godfrey is preceded by the title "Senator." He is in the other place, a former bagman of the Liberal Party. The Liberal collection agent is now in the Senate—being paid, incidentally, from public funds to carry on the program for a registered political party. The professor goes on to express his appreciation and thanks to Finlay MacDonald, national campaign chairman, Malcolm Wickson and Mr. Curley of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, as well as Mr. Clifford Scotton, federal secretary of the NDP for his unstinting help over the years. Professor Paltiel was able to obtain from those persons, and probably from others because he says he wishes to thank "numerous Liberal, PC and NDP officials" and bring together in one paper information about expenditures and incomes of political parties that has not until now been available to anyone.

I know that the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) on a number of occasions in committee, in speaking about another aspect of the bill said that nobody knew of the financial involvement of political parties at the national level, that no one had this information and that it has never been brought together. For instance, he did not know what it was with respect to his own party. I assume that the people to whom Professor Paltiel spoke, the people to whom he gave special accolades for their help with respect to this paper, told him precisely what the truth was. They had nothing to hide. He documented it in here. His opinion—and this is the only one of which I know—is based upon a very careful analysis of the value and the impact of a federal election campaign.

It is his opinion that the value that accrues to a political party at the national level during an election campaign, the value that comes to the political party from the fact that that party forms the government, is in the neighbour-

[Mr. Howard.]

hood of a quarter of a million dollars. In other words, the mere fact of being in office, with the facilities that are available—and Professor Paltiel spells them out; he talks in terms of facilities such as government aircraft and cabinet ministers travelling on government aircraft from one place to another—has a value attached to it. The government employs propagandists, loosely called speech-writers, to write speeches, to prepare press releases, to engage in assessments and in conducting polls of opinion in the country about how the party is doing.

Officials who do that sort of work are paid out of the public treasury, and Professor Paltiel puts the costs all together and concludes that they amount to something in the neighbourhood of \$250,000. Perhaps it would be worth while to read what he says. The following appears on page 9:

At the very least part of the substantial differences in the cost of the leader's tour and administrative costs of the party as compared with parallel Progressive Conservative expenses may be accounted for in this manner. In all, these unrequited services probably benefited the Liberal party by a sum not far short of \$250,000 which should be added to the total in the aforementioned table.

On the previous page he sets out a table of the expenditures of the Liberal Party for such things as the leader's tour and expenses for television, the printed media and the like.

This amendment which the committee made includes an amendment proposed by the Progressive Conservative Party, specifically the amendment of the hon. member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton (Mr. Dick). The amendment, which the committee accepted, said that the costs of goods and services provided by a government Crown corporation or any other public agency have to be included in what are election expenses. The amendment that I seek to make here, in so far as the first part is concerned, is to remove the words "a government Crown corporation or any other public agency" and replace them with the words "Her Majesty in right of Canada".

My reason for doing that is as follows. The word "government" has extremely broad application and includes a provincial government. It is true that some provincial governments have in the past exerted some of their energies at the federal level toward the party to which they belong. I am quite sure that that has occurred. Governments also include municipal governments and regional districts. In my estimation they include school boards, school districts and hospital districts organized under provincial law. The amendment that I propose, and the other one that is proposed which is a companion to this for a later part of the bill, seeks to narrow the interpretation of what is government from the extreme and broad down to the federal government, because it is a federal elections act, there are federal candidates involved and it is members of the House of Commons who are being elected.

● (1610)

It is the federal government that is being formed out of the particular election which is the one, I think properly and only, that should be accountable in making returns about what it does or what facilities it provides—to the extent that you can assess them—what facilities and services it provides toward the conduct of an election when