

● (1600)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ELECTION EXPENSES

PROVISION OF PAYMENTS TO CANDIDATES AND REIMBURSEMENT OF PARTIES FOR CERTAIN BROADCASTING TIME

The House resumed, from Wednesday, December 19, consideration of Bill C-203, to amend the Canada Elections Act, the Broadcasting Act and the Income Tax Act in respect of election expenses, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections; motion No. 7 (Mr. Rodriguez) and motions Nos. 17 and 31 (Mr. Benjamin).

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I ask your indulgence to consider motion No. 27, which appears in my name, as being withdrawn. Since it duplicates another motion, there is no purpose in its being on the order paper.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to withdraw his motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the motion has not been moved. I do not see why it requires unanimous consent to remove it from the order paper.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the solution would be to wait until we reach that item of business, after which we might have the usual interesting procedural debate on such matters. The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) had the floor and still has the floor.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the commencement of consideration of this bill the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) raised a question of privilege with respect to something I had said earlier in the debate. Since the Minister of Transport raised the matter I have had the opportunity to look at what he said and at what *Hansard* reported me as saying. I understand that the minister had an objection to the following words used by me, or the implication of them. I am quoting now from page 8908 of yesterday's *Hansard*, where the minister quoted the following:

On the one hand, he was giving out \$6 million to IBM and the next day he went knocking on their door saying, "I am collecting funds for the Liberal Party."

That was the end of the quotation. What occurred, obviously, was the statement I made it was a figurative or pictorial statement and not a literal declaration that the minister himself went personally as a fund collector to IBM, to Noranda or Gaspé Copper, I think it was, or any of the other companies which received grants under his name. In fact, I know the minister made the declaration that he at no time collected any money on an earlier occasion when the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) made reference to a letter that went out over the minister's signature, when he was minister of

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regional economic expansion, and invited people to a cocktail party partly for the purpose of cocktailing and partly for the purpose of fund raising.

I do, even though I was speaking figuratively, extend to the minister my apologies for the implication in that remark, or what he drew from it, that he went personally as a fund collector. That was not the intent of what I was getting at. What in fact I was getting at was the simple question of a conflict of interest. I will say that. If the minister so desires, I will say it outside the House so that he can proceed with a court case. I thought then, and I think now, that there was a serious conflict of interest involved in the minister of regional economic expansion being in the position of making gifts, or grants in aid to corporations which applied for them pursuant to a statute of the Parliament of Canada while at the same time he was one of two co-chairmen of the national campaign committee of the Liberal Party. That is the conflict of interest.

I see the minister is leaving, so he obviously is not interested in my going any further into that matter. Apart from the fact that many of the companies which received grants under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion while the minister was then minister of the department attended a fund raising dinner in Toronto at which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) spoke, I am sure the minister did not himself collect any money. I accept his statement on that matter, but he sure had a great deal of conflict of interest involved.

If the minister would like to sue me for saying that he did have a conflict of interest, that there was a conflict between being minister and making gifts of money to corporations while he was chairman of the national campaign committee of the Liberal Party, I will gladly make that statement outside the House and see the minister in court, if that is what he wants. He obviously does not, because he knows the truth of and the implications behind what I am saying.

Apart from that, I think the subamendment that is before us should commend itself to hon. members. I will not read it word for word because if I did I would have to make sure I got all the commas in the right places. What it says is that in so far as individual persons are concerned, they can only make contributions to a political party—there is another section of the act that says they have to be the beneficial owner of that money—or to candidates if they are Canadian citizens or people with landed immigrant status, which is entry into Canada pursuant to statute of parliament; in other words, being here in a legal way. With respect to corporations, it says quite succinctly and clearly that only corporations which are Canadian owned—and it uses percentage figures for what "Canadian ownership" means—and corporations which are not effectively controlled by a foreign group or individual in another land can make contributions to political parties or candidates.

It says that trade unions, only if they are Canadian, can make contributions to political parties or candidates, and that associations or organizations—these are all groups and classes set out in that clause of the bill—can only make contributions if they are organized and chartered as such pursuant to the law of the province.