

*Canada Elections Act*

beyond that. But the warning is clear in the act. They will be asked to acquire Canadian citizenship, as is now the case for Poles, Germans and so on, many hundreds and thousands of whom live in my constituency. They will be asked to acquire their citizenship in order to vote in the next federal election.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I appeal to those who wish to strike out subclause 3 not to strike it out and deprive some people of their vote. That is not what Canadians want. We do not want to do something vindictive to those people who have come here and who have been given that privilege. Let us recognize that Canadians want the vote to be fair. Let us issue the warning within the Act. These people should be given an opportunity to become Canadian citizens and, after a reasonable lapse of time in which to acquire their citizenship, to vote.

**The Chairman:** Order, please. Perhaps my remarks now will help to clarify what I anticipate the point of order might be. This amendment moved by the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra is an amendment to subclause 3. The committee is now considering an amendment to subclause 3. I therefore cannot put this amendment. As I understand it, what is before the committee is not an amendment to an amendment, but rather a subsequent amendment to subclause 3, assuming the amendment now before the committee does not carry. I ask the hon. member to withhold this amendment. In the course of time, he will have a chance to put his amendment and the committee can then vote on it.

There is a further complication. I have been advised that a number of members wish to move amendments. I wish to make a suggestion as to procedure with which the committee might agree. We could deal with the amendment now before us, namely that subclause 3 be deleted, and in turn deal with the amendments as they come forward. We have ample time. We can hear as many amendments and speeches as hon. members wish. There is no restriction to the committee of the whole. Every member will have the right to speak or move an amendment. He will not be restricted in any way. I ask the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra to withhold his amendment. I am prepared to recognize the hon. member at a subsequent time when he can move the amendment. Meanwhile, we will continue the debate on the amendment of the hon. member for Matane.

[Mr. Deachman.]

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. In committee of the whole it is difficult to follow other than the course set out in the rules, namely that we must deal with the motion before us, the motion to amend. I am not trying to put thoughts in the mind of the hon. member for Matane or to interpret what he meant. It may well be that on this or any other amendment that may be before us the mover and seconder will be prepared to adjust their thinking if we could reach a more agreeable amendment, one that might have wider support. We preclude ourselves from doing that if we follow the normal course of voting on several amendments. If we assume, for the sake of argument, that the amendment of the hon. member for Matane is carried that will preclude any subsequent amendments. The committee will have made a decision on that particular subject.

It is true that this proposal was studied by the standing committee. Possibly there might be agreement, after a short period of time, on suggestions about alternative amendments. Presumably we will not in any event get through this bill by six o'clock. The matter could stand over. We could then have an ad hoc committee meeting of those who have an interest in this matter to see whether there could be some agreement. The committee must be concerned about the right of Canadians to vote in order to choose their Parliament. Party differences and individual differences should transcend the rigidity of the rules. To a large extent, the rules were developed to deal with matters other than election law. I think the President of the Privy Council said that election law is the one law that is exempted from the Order in Council structure of government. All of the details are spelled out in the act because of its vital importance to our democratic institution.

An alternate and more agreeable way of dealing with this might be to have the matter stand. We could then listen to suggestions regarding amendments that individuals might have. Possibly at this meeting agreement could be reached on the divergent views and we could then come to a conclusion.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** With regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Skeena, I agree with the wisdom of his suggestion. The hon. member for Hillsborough mentioned last night that at least one of his colleagues will move an amendment on this particular point. Perhaps we might follow a