

Government Organization

Mr. Baldwin: After listening to the debate, in which I did not participate much as I was tempted to, I am sorry to hear the President of the Privy Council and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre indicate they cannot support this idea because it is new. I would have thought that in matters of this kind the fact that something had not been done before should not be the basis of an objection to it being tried at this time. I am amazed at the company which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is keeping at this time.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Don't rub it in, please.

Mr. Baldwin: The amendment was defeated, of course, and is not subject to discussion. Despite what the minister and the President of the Privy Council said, there is nothing in the bill that will make it essential that the report be referred to a committee dealing with the operations of the department. Let me point out that we have passed clause 39, which will presumably be passed by the other place, and will become part of the law under which we give to the government the right to legislate. The Governor-in-Council is empowered to make regulations for carrying out the purposes and the provisions of this bill. These are very wide powers indeed; they virtually constitute the right to legislate. For that reason, the operations of the minister and his department under this report should certainly be the subject of discussion and consideration by the appropriate committee. Will the minister undertake that so long as he is minister he will ensure that this report will be given to the appropriate committee for its consideration each year?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I think the power to make regulations which is contained in clause 39 is not more extensive than the power given to other departments.

Mr. Baldwin: But it is still objectionable.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): This is nothing special. Perhaps the whole bill will have to be revised some day, but this is the only way to proceed.

To answer the hon. member's question, if there is a good reason for referring the report of the department to a special committee, I will be ready to discuss it and accept it. I do not see the difference between discussing it now or at some other time when the problem is before the house. What my reaction will be at that time I do not know because it will depend on the importance of the report. I do

not think it is fair to expect me to commit myself on a problem that has not yet arisen, and on something that I know nothing about right now.

Mr. Baldwin: Will he place any obstacle in the path of the committee considering and receiving this report? I put it to the minister in this way: Despite what he said, under clause 39 this government is securing extraordinary powers to make regulations and to carry out the purposes and provisions of the bill. These powers have been specifically spelled out; they have been debated, they have been the subject of amendment and they were passed.

Now, we have reached a situation where the minister can be given by the Governor-in-Council wide and extraordinary powers. Much of what will be done will be done by regulation. If the minister is not prepared to give an undertaking that the report will be given to the appropriate committee for consideration by that committee, will he at least indicate that he is prepared to facilitate the committee being given the opportunity to consider the report and that he will place no obstacles in the path of it doing so?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): If this is something reasonable, I am sure I will support it. If it is a manoeuvre, I will oppose it. The hon. member tells me that a majority government may abuse its power. I think that is true. The only remedy for that, as far as I can see, is an election and nothing else. But if I think the proposal is reasonable, then as far as I am concerned I will surely support it. I cannot go further than that.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Chairman, I should simply like to make a few remarks following those of my colleague of Peace River (Mr. Baldwin).

When the anti-dumping legislation was being studied, we were able to insert in it a provision stipulating that all regulations passed by the governor in council will be tabled in the house and referred to the appropriate committee.

The minister knows as well as I do that under the regulations act, any regulation enacted in accordance with section 39 should at least be published in the Canada Gazette.

But there is an exception and the minister will recall our discussion with his colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, (Mr. Olson) during the consideration of Bills C-154, C-156 and C-157. At that time, the Minister of Agricul-