

National Defence Act Amendment

not been printed, whereupon I expressed surprise and said I would immediately look into the matter. This I did, and I was assured that it had been printed. I was also assured that at the very moment of that conversation the reprinted bill was being placed in the binders beneath hon. members' desks in the House of Commons. I do not know when they were delivered to hon. members' offices or to their mail boxes but I am assured it was done earlier today both as to the evidence and as to the reprinted bills.

Mr. Lambert: May I ask the minister whether he is satisfied that report No. 37 of the minutes of proceedings and evidence was distributed? He will clearly remember my telling him that No. 37 had been printed but was not available for distribution, though Nos. 34 to 36 were perhaps available to members if they went down to the distribution office and got them themselves. That was at a quarter to one this afternoon. At that time No. 37 was not available for distribution. It may have been printed but it was not available for distribution.

Mr. McIlraith: I checked on this immediately the conversation had taken place. I do not know the precise time; it was somewhere between twelve thirty and one o'clock. I was assured that it was printed, available, and distributed.

Mr. Ricard: I have just received my copy.

Mr. McIlraith: I have no way of knowing, beyond that.

An hon. Member: In English and French?

Mr. McIlraith: Yes, in both English and French.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, on the point of order which has been raised, this is too serious a matter to be glossed over so carelessly by the leader of the house. Yes, we have in our possession, placed in the binders today, Bill No. C-243 reprinted as amended and reported by the committee on national defence. Consequently we need some other document to which to refer in order to check with regard to the amended clauses. The old bill has been removed from our binders. I was looking for mine in order to begin making the comparison. Obviously we need something else in addition. It has been normal to use *Votes and Proceedings* with the amendments printed therein.

When the committee reported on March 22 it stated, as my hon. friend from Edmonton West has pointed out, that a further report setting out the amendments to the bill had been prepared and would be presented. This was presented today, but of course it cannot appear in *Votes and Proceedings* until tomorrow. The leader of the house tells us we have available the final report of the committee on national defence. That is not true. It is not available to me. I have not got it here, unless it is being delivered at this very moment.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: This, I say, is making a mockery of the House of Commons. Here we have the senior page delivering copies of the final report of the minutes of proceedings and evidence—No. 37. I would want to be assured that every single member of the House of Commons has that report in his possession before we proceed with this debate this afternoon. It is all very well to come here with a dozen copies and pass them out to people who may be on their feet speaking or who have said something about this matter. Each of the 265 members of this house is entitled to this report. Even so, I say that the normal procedure is to have the amendments printed in *Votes and Proceedings* which is available at our desks, having been filed each day by the pages. We wish to refer to this background information right now and this is where it should appear. Unless every single member of this house can give you the assurance, Mr. Speaker, that he has report No. 37 in his possession it is not fair to ask this institution to proceed with the bill at this stage.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary North): On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, aside altogether from what one might call the legal requirements to which the Minister of Public Works attached a great deal of emphasis, I think it is unfair and unreasonable to expect members of this house to proceed with a bill of this nature when the relevant committee reports and the bill as amended were not in their hands until a few moments ago. I did not receive Nos. 33, 35 and 36 of the committee reports until twelve thirty or one o'clock today. The first time I saw No. 37, which outlines the amendments made in the committee, was two or three minutes ago after it had been distributed in the house. I did not receive an amended copy of Bill No. C-243. The first printing of the bill was on my file when I came into the house.