

*Government Organization*

necessary for me to repeat what has been said. Therefore, I move:

That clause 8 of Bill No. C-178 be amended by inserting therein immediately after subparagraph (a), the following new subparagraph:

"(b) Review of prices and matters of concern to consumers",

and by relettering the subsequent subparagraphs (b), (c) and (d) as subparagraphs (c), (d) and (e).

I have copies of this amendment in both English and French, and I hope that it will commend itself to members in all parties. As hon. members will note, our suggestion is with reference to a review of prices and matters of concern to consumers, and we feel it would more logically come immediately after subparagraph (a) which deals with combines, mergers, monopolies and restraint of trade.

This is the reason for putting this new subparagraph in right after subparagraph (a), and then suggesting that the other subparagraphs (b), (c) and (d) might be relettered (c), (d) and (e). As I say, the arguments for this position were made when we contended that the department as a whole should be geared to this important function. This idea was not accepted, but surely even those who spoke against our previous amendment will agree that there ought to be in the statute some provision making it clear that the department of the registrar general is the ministry in the government to be concerned about such things as the review of prices and matters of concern to consumers.

**Mr. Benson:** I presume I can obtain the support of five members, but I should like to defer the vote on this matter until eight o'clock.

• (7:30 p.m.)

**The Chairman:** Order. The Chair has some doubt whether it can really put this amendment to the committee. First, I would say that it does not appear to be relevant to the clause before the committee. Second, I would refer hon. members to May's seventeenth edition, page 549, paragraph (2), which reads as follows:

An amendment cannot be admitted, if it is governed or dependent upon amendments which have already been negated.

Paragraph (3) on page 549 reads as follows:

An amendment must not be inconsistent with, or contrary to, the bill as so far agreed to by the committee, nor must it be inconsistent with a decision of the committee upon a former amendment.

[Mr. Knowles.]

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Chairman, are you ruling before listening to argument?

**The Chairman:** I will hear the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

**Mr. Knowles:** Thank you, sir. May I suggest that there is an answer to each of the points Your Honour has been presenting to us. First, may I suggest that the subject matter of this amendment is certainly relevant to the whole function of the registrar general. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister himself when he spoke on second reading of the bill referred to consumer affairs as something which, if dealt with anywhere, might be dealt with by an extension of the powers of the registrar general.

Likewise, the President of the Privy Council, in speaking to the amendment proposed today by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, dealt on his own initiative with the whole question of consumer affairs and with what might be done for the people under this heading. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that this is not introducing something brand new into this area; this is simply expanding a concept which, in the words of the Prime Minister and in the words of the President of the Privy Council, is already there.

The second argument Your Honour has tossed at us is the suggestion that we cannot move as another amendment a subject which has already been the subject of an amendment which has been negated by a previous vote, or by a vote under some other heading. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the vote on the amendment to clause 6 was merely a vote on the change of the name of the department. There is no reference in clause 6 to the functions of the department of the registrar general. Clause 6 of the bill merely gives a name to the department. I submit that an amendment that sought to change the name, having been defeated, is not a decision on the part of the committee as to what should be the functions of the department.

Then Your Honour suggested that an amendment of this kind should be consistent with the provisions of the bill which have already been agreed to. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that in line with the statements made by the Prime Minister on second reading and in line with the statements made today by the President of the Privy Council, this amendment is certainly consistent with the provision of the bill.