

*Regulations and other Statutory Instruments*

they must have an opportunity to assess how some of these regulations will affect people when the bills are passed. The hon. member for Burlington (Mr. Kempling) gave an example of this earlier.

● (1750)

In some ways we seem to have turned the responsibility placed in us by our electors over to officials. This is a contradiction of the old English system of law and the sense that the people who make the laws should be separated from the people who enforce them. But it sometimes happens that the people in the department who draft the regulations are in a position to interpret those same regulations. This is a contradiction in terms, like having the people who make the laws—the parliamentarians—enforcing the laws. We see that in the case of the Department of National Revenue and in some ways in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

In his response the minister did not actually say that he would not concur in this report. I do not want to use the word excuse, although perhaps it is the appropriate word to characterize his response when he said he thought it would take up the time of the House, that there were other things going on and that he was worried about how an amendment to the act would affect the time of the House. That is what the House is for, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that if an amendment were brought forward that would make the act easier to administer and easier for people to understand, the opposition would pass it very quickly.

The hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty) made the point that this could be done with the bill to amend miscellaneous statutes. If there were discussions beforehand and everyone was familiar with the amendments proposed by the government, then I am sure that in the interests of fairness and expediency the opposition would pass several of the amendments very quickly. Actually, Mr. Speaker, that is what the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments was trying to do.

The thirteenth report of this joint committee of the House and the Senate was passed unanimously, Mr. Speaker. It is interesting that the government has set up a special committee to examine changes in the rules and procedures of the House. We all know that there are things that could be done to improve our procedures. I think that without even changing the Standing Orders, without changing the time limit on speeches and a lot of other things, we could achieve a great deal if there were a better attitude in the House. The government could demonstrate a change of attitude by concurring in this report from such a prestigious committee. I see no reason why it should not be accepted by the government almost automatically; in fact, I think there should be a compulsion on the government to comply with it as quickly as possible.

The hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) spoke on that matter and made the point that if the government took its job seriously and made sure that backbenchers on both sides of the House had a chance to do their job effectively, that would ensure that they know how regulations affect people and whether they express the intent of a bill. After such an examination was completed and if there was a unanimous report, what would be wrong with accepting it automatically? After all, the job of parliamentarians is to look at such things, and that is exactly what this committee has done.

This is a large country geographically and in the number of regions it contains, Mr. Speaker. When laws are passed and regulations are formulated to enforce them, it can hardly be expected that they will affect people uniformly from coast to coast. This makes it all the more necessary to have a committee such as this one assess the things that have been included in the thirteenth report.

The debate this afternoon has been useful but it is unfortunate that such discussion is necessary when common sense should deal with the matter effectively. Not only do we have problems with the amount of regulations and the number of orders in council passed by government officials, but too often in the area of foreign trade government officials are responsible for negotiating trade concessions, tariffs, etc. We are a trading nation, as the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is well aware. We have problems with the Americans on the east coast. Surely this is an area in which parliamentarians should be more involved. Rather than having the executive appoint officials to negotiate international trade agreements, I would like to see parliamentary committees and individual members become more involved.

In the interests of time and not wanting to talk the motion out, Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying that I hope the exercise this afternoon has been useful to the government and that it will see fit to concur as quickly as possible in the thirteenth report of the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.