

House of Commons Act

are all extremely competent. They know what they are doing. They have cut down on expenses. They have actually, for a change, made me proud to be a Member of this House of Commons.

Considering the fact that all of these positions are not porkbarrelled, there will certainly be some discontent. However, I suggest there are further changes needed. Eventually, once the civil service, if you will, of the House of Commons becomes the professional civil service that it should be, then we will begin to see the esprit de corps that I know can and will exist within this House of Commons.

The reason services have been slowed, the reason the promises of a competent Administrator have not yet been fulfilled, the reason that the Report of the Auditor General has not been finally completed—and I admit fully to being a party to the originating of the Report—is that we have been opposed, step by step, by the President of the Privy Council. I want to go on record as saying that I would like to think that we will in fact see those changes come about in the near future.

● (1710)

Before I move the motion I intend to make, may I say one brief word. The Hon. Member for Capilano mentioned briefly that he felt frustrated because he had not been able to achieve those things which he believed we should have been able to achieve in his nine years here. He mentioned the Hon. Robert Andras, in terms that I thought were complimentary, and the former Auditor General.

I suggest to the Hon. Member that while things may be worse now, thanks to him in his position as chairman of the committee and others like him, they are not as bad as they might have been. While it is relative, at least we are slightly better off. When there are people in the House who are prepared to bite the bullet, it seems to me a crying shame that we should not be allowed to have the Member who presented the Bill move that it go to committee. Therefore, I will move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word that and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-687, an Act to amend the House of Commons Act (internal economy) be not now read a second time but that the order be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Management and Members' Services".

That will put the issue before the House. We still have lots of time to deal with it and vote on it. Let us see if the President of the Privy Council or his Parliamentary Secretary has the courage of his convictions to let us act in the way this House should act.

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

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think there was some question at issue with regard to the Bill itself. The Bill put

forward a specific configuration for the Commission of Internal Economy.

Mr. McGrath: It is the subject matter.

Mr. Evans: The Hon. Member says that it is the subject matter. The difficulty with referring the subject matter to a committee is that a committee of the House has already dealt with this subject matter and has tabled a report, the ninth report of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedures. It has tabled a report that dealt with this issue and which puts forward a new configuration. It takes into consideration all the issues raised by the House today.

Let me quote from the report that deals with this. Paragraph 5 of the ninth report of the Committee states that:

5. Consequently your Committee proposes that a new Board of Internal Economy be set up, and we have included a draft bill with this Report to effect this change. The draft bill is aimed at modifying the make-up of the Board by enlarging the range of its members to ensure the participation of Members of Parliament who are not Cabinet members. The Board would in the future be composed of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, two Ministers of the Crown, the Leader of the Official Opposition or a Member designated by the Leader, and four others: two Members appointed by the government caucus, and two from the opposition caucuses including at least one from the Official Opposition. The draft bill does not specify how the representatives of each caucus are to be chosen. We recognize that this is a question to be dealt with by each caucus independently, but we favour the idea of organizing elections within each caucus for this purpose.

Mr. Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the Hon. Member accept a question at this point concerning what he is saying?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Does the Hon. Member accept a question?

Mr. Evans: It is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary says that it is not a point of order. This is the usual way of inquiring if the Hon. Member would accept a question. In any case, the Hon. Member has the floor.

Mr. Blaikie: Say yes or no.

Mr. Evans: Obviously the answer is no. I want to finish my remarks. Time is running out.

Mr. Huntington: Why do you not move concurrence in report No. 9?

Mr. Evans: The Hon. Member asks if we are going to concur in the report. It is under discussion right now.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In view of the words and views expressed by the Parliamentary Secretary, I would like to move concurrence in the ninth report of the Special Committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order. Pursuant to Standing Order 24(2), it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings.