

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 18, 1969

The House met at 2 p.m.

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PROMOTION OF ALEXANDER SMALL TO POSITION OF SECOND CLERK ASSISTANT

Mr. Speaker: I am pleased to inform hon. members of the promotion to the position of Second Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons of Mr. Alexander Small. Mr. Small will continue to serve as Director of Legislative Services. I am sure hon. members will be gratified at this recognition of the services of this loyal, competent and highly esteemed table officer.

PRIVILEGE

MR. STEWART (COCHRANE)—PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which affects me personally and the principle of which affects all hon. members who are considered as backbenchers. Yesterday an announcement was made by the Department of Finance that effigies of former Prime Ministers would be placed on Canadian currency. This is a measure which I welcome, but it is one which I introduced in the form of a private member's bill during the last session on February 6, 1969, as found on page 5213 of *Hansard*. That private member's bill has been sitting on the Order Paper for almost one year and now a decision by a department of government puts into effect the subject matter of that bill without referring to it.

All hon. members are encouraged to take an active part in government and to bring forth new ideas. However, the system used according to the rules of the House to deal with private members' bills is such that backbenchers do not have sufficient opportunity to participate in the way they should.

To illustrate how the detail of the announcement coincides with what I did last February, let me say that after introducing my bill I outlined some suggestions for dealing with it, such as keeping the effigy of Her Majesty on one of the denominations. I even

ventured an opinion, wrongly as it turns out, that the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) would not comment on it because he would be torn between two great loves. However, the bill has never had the opportunity to come before the House because of a silly method for determining the business of private members.

• (2:10 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stewart (Cochrane): Before the second session began all of the bills were thrown together and drawn from a hat in order to determine their precedence. It seems to me that legislation should not be considered as a matter of chance. When a member waits for a long list of bills to be disposed of throughout one session he should not be obliged to wait for another list to be disposed of in a new session before being able to deal with his bill. When a member suggests a piece of legislation which is adopted by the government almost one year later, should he not be entitled to at least a teeny bit of recognition?

Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Timmins (Mr. Roy):

That the matter of dealing more efficiently with private members' business be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As hon. members know, a determination has to be made by the Chair on whether there is a *prima facie* case of privilege in the circumstances alleged by the hon. member for Cochrane.

The hon. member has given the Chair the required notice and I have had an opportunity to give very serious consideration to the grievance which he has brought forward. I use the word "grievance" advisedly because in my humble opinion what the hon. member is submitting for the attention of the House at the present time is a grievance rather than a question of privilege.

If there is, as he suggests, something wrong with the procedure adopted by the House for dealing with private bills that, of course, is a matter that ought to be considered in the usual way by the Committee on Procedure of the House of Commons. I would suggest to