

Revised Statutes

provided that the matter is dealt with expeditiously by the House.

In addition, three supplements will be published of subsequent enactments of the House which will bring it up to date as of the end of the last session. Our target date for that is September, 1988.

I have been Minister of Justice for only a year and a half—*tempus fugit* as we say in the Department of Justice. I believe that I have acted with some vigour and authority with regard to the *Revised Statutes of Canada*. There have been some delays but I hope that we can get this Bill through in order that all Members of Parliament will have the most current version of the laws. I hope that the improvements that are manifest in these amendments will be of assistance to Members. Let us say that in March of 1988 the Hon. Member will have the new, improved *Revised Statutes of Canada*. If he wishes, I will personally autograph his copy.

Mr. Boudria: Madam Chairman, that last remark really makes it all worth while. It will be a precious set of statutes which has the Minister's autograph.

I would like to ask him in little more detail about publication and availability for the future. I assume it has always been the case that upon publication every Member gets a copy. However, I am really asking whether any new Member elected at the next election will be provided with that as a matter of right. I believe they should be.

If the Minister's answer is that that is automatically done, there was then a breach of the Act last time because I did not get one and I am quite sure, Madam Chairman, that you and any other Member who was elected for the first time in 1984 did not get one either because we were told that they were out of stock at that time.

I am looking for the assurance that the statutes and regulations will be provided automatically, not only at time of publication but between publications, to any Member who is elected in the interval between the date of publication and distribution of these statutes and the next date of printing.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Chairman, the people who are entitled to receive, as a matter of right, the statutes of Canada include the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governors of the provinces, the Speaker of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, Ministers of the Government of Canada, Members of the Parliament of Canada not otherwise included on this list, members of the judiciary of Canada including provincial court judges and magistrates, Attorneys General, Ministers of Justice and Solicitors General of the governments of the provinces, the chief or senior legislative counsel of each province, chief librarians of court houses in Canada, chief librarians of law schools in Canada, members and officials of the government of any foreign country and persons holding positions in universities and other institutions in that country if

reciprocal arrangements exist for similar distribution without charge in Canada or if the Minister of Justice, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the National Librarian or the Parliamentary Librarian recommend the free distribution.

With regard to the dilemma faced by the Hon. Member when he was elected and found no statutes of Canada, I am informed that Members of Parliament are expected not to keep their copies when they resign or retire but are supposed to hand them to their successors. I cannot recall the Hon. Member's case exactly, but if he goes to the Livestock Review Board he may find his own personalized version available for him. His distinguished predecessor has probably forgotten to hand it over to him.

Mr. Thacker: Madam Chairman, I would like to ask a question of the Minister *vis-à-vis* the future. This is a historic day, not only for lawyers, law students and judges, but certainly for academics, civil servants and any of our citizens who work with the laws of Canada. It is a pleasure to be in the House today.

● (1200)

As well, as former chairman of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General, I want to thank the drafters. People do not generally appreciate that the *Revised Statutes of Canada* are probably six feet in length, consisting of small print in big volumes. It is an enormous job to write all the English statutes into the new modern English phraseology, as well as revising from whole cloth the French version of the statutes to be equally authoritative so that anyone reading the French would know that it is not a translation from the English, word for word, but written from whole cloth. That is a wonderful development in this country.

I believe that the standing committees of the House and the Senate also deserve our appreciation. It is an example of the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes for which no one ever gets credit. Certainly, Members of Parliament from all Parties who spend many hours at committee stage sitting on these committees get very little credit.

We found that during the first meetings of the standing committee the process had gone to such an advanced stage that it was very difficult for the standing committees here and in the Senate to recommend very major changes. Under the old process, during the previous administration, standing committees did not play as great a role as they do now. Since the House agreed to the new standing orders, the standing committees play a larger role.

Since this will be an ongoing process, which is another new and novel feature, will the Minister give his assurance that the standing committee will be brought in on more frequent occasions to give its advice?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Chairperson, I want to thank the Hon. Member for Lethbridge—Foothills, as former chairman of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General,