

like to say I thoroughly enjoyed the discussion which has taken place this afternoon. Let me congratulate particularly those hon. members who represent northern areas of Canada and who this afternoon gave the members of this House a picture of the north and the developments taking place there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Earlier this afternoon the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), seconded by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin), put a motion before the House. At that time I asked the House for an opportunity to consider it and to look at the authorities. If hon. members agree, I intend to dispose of the motion now and make a brief comment on my reasons. Before doing so it might be useful if I read the main motion and the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Yukon. The main motion is the following:

That Bill C-193, to amend the Northern Canada Power Commission Act, be read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

The proposed amendment thereto is as follows:

That all the words after "that" be left out and the following inserted:

"this bill be not now read a second time but that the subject matter of the recommendation in relation to the bill be referred to a committee of the Whole House".

I have had an opportunity to consider the very helpful arguments on the procedural point posed by hon. members, and to consult some of the authorities. I will very briefly give the two points which I feel make the proposed motion unacceptable to the Chair, on a procedural basis.

The first point relates to relevancy. Hon. members will note that the amendment is that the subject matter of the recommendation be referred to a committee of the whole House rather than the subject matter of the bill itself. I might point out that the recommendation is not before the House in any legal or formal sense. The relevant Standing Order provides that a recommendation is to be attached or annexed to a bill. I believe this is for the convenience of members.

It seems to me that the recommendation is not part of the bill and that we cannot consider it as such. The recommendation, therefore, is not relevant to the provisions of the bill; rather, it is extraneous to the provisions of the bill. Without reading it, I might mention Beauchesne's citation 203(1), which is helpful in this regard.

The hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Howard) put forward a very helpful argument on procedural aspects and the substance of this amendment. If I followed him correctly, he suggested that if the motion were adopted by the house, our procedure would not allow us to follow through after the committee had considered the subject matter of the recommendation. That was a useful argument, but before accepting it the Chair must also determine whether the motion is acceptable on the basis of precedent. I was not able to find any precedent in respect

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of this type of motion. That, in itself, may not be sufficient reason to rule it out of order.

There are precedents which would suggest that the subject matter of a bill, or an amendment providing that the subject matter be referred to a standing or select committee, or an established entity, commission or agency, would be acceptable; but there seems to be no precedent providing for a referral, at this stage of the proceedings, to a committee of the whole House. For those reasons I regret that on procedural grounds I cannot accept this motion.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the House indicated that the Chair might put the motion I have proposed by way of an amendment, with the consent of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has indicated that where the House is agreeable—and in this regard I must ask for unanimous consent—the amendment to the motion might be put in the way the hon. member has suggested. Without making a ruling on the procedural correctness of this amendment, I should like to ask the House whether there is unanimous consent. If there is unanimous consent, I think the motion as suggested by the hon. member, might be put to the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nielsen: The proposed amendment to the motion would then read:

That all the words after "that" be left out and the following inserted:

"this bill be not now read a second time but that the subject matter thereof be referred to a task force appointed under the Inquiries Act."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before ruling on the proposed amendment to the main motion I should like to refer to its procedural acceptability. Hon. members will recall that a similar procedure was before the House on January 13 in respect of a motion proposed by the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams). Although that motion was somewhat extended, it was similar in terms. After considerable argument about its procedural acceptability, there was unanimous consent and the Chair felt the motion could be accepted. The motion was then put along the same line as now suggested in the motion proposed by the hon. member for Yukon.

Before I put the proposed motion, and so we will have this on the record, I should like to draw a distinction between this motion and what seems to be clearly acceptable in respect of this kind of motion. I refer to citation 386(1) of Beauchesne's Fourth Edition. I shall not read the whole citation, but it reads in part as follows:

That the bill be not now read a second time but that the subject matter be referred to the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada.