

*Transportation*

I suppose I have quoted citation 382 in this house scores of times, but having read it again just now it seems to me there is a phrase in it which does provide a basis for the validity of this amendment. May I read citation 382 in its entirety and then draw to Your Honour's attention one particular part of it. I might point out that the citations previous to 382 refer to the second reading stage of debate. Then citation 382 says:

It is also competent to a member who desires to place on record any special reasons for not agreeing to the second reading of a bill, to move as an amendment to the question—

That is what the hon. member to my right has done. He has moved an amendment to the question for second reading.

—a resolution declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the bill, or expressing opinions as to any circumstances connected with its introduction, or prosecution; or otherwise opposed to its progress; or seeking further information in relation to the bill by committees, commissioners, the production of papers or other evidence or the opinion of judges.

The part of that citation to which I think Your Honour will have to give a great deal of weight is the phrase "or seeking further information in relation to the bill by committees." Could you ask for a more apt description of the amendment which the hon. member for Middlesex West has moved? He says in his amendment that this is a complex bill, that we should not be asked at this point to make a decision on it, that in some way it should remain before the house with regard to what our decision on second reading is to be but that before making that decision we have the right to seek further information in relation to the bill through a committee.

I know how long is the list of amendments to the second reading of bills which have been ruled out of order. I know the citations and the precedents that have been quoted. But surely this is an unusual situation in that we have before us a bill with so many principles in it that one cannot talk about the principle of the bill, a bill that amends several acts, a bill that, as the Minister of Transport himself says, affects our life and concerns us almost more than language and religion. Surely it is the part of common sense to have such a bill discussed and examined by a committee before we are called upon to make a decision on second reading.

I am speaking to the point of order raised by the Minister of Transport, but I cannot help but say that I like what this amendment

asks for. The amendment seeks to avoid saying no to the bill at this point. It asks the House of Commons to take the common-sense approach of letting a committee of this house study it carefully and report back to us, whereupon we might continue with the debate on second reading and reach a decision on principle.

I am fully aware of the fact that what I am arguing for is a departure from what has so often been the practice. I realize that it may seem to come right up against the whole theory of responsible government namely, that the government brings in its bills and we have to take them or leave them as they are. But times are changing; there are revolutions, quiet and otherwise, around the place, and it seems to me that if what we are asking for has common sense on its side it ought to be considered by this House of Commons.

**Mr. Fulton:** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to add very much to the comprehensive argument put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre on the point of order, but I should like to refer Your Honour to some precedents whereby parliament, the parliament of Westminster at any rate, has allowed the second reading of a bill to be deferred and the bill to be referred to a committee for consideration and report, exactly as has been suggested here.

May I first of all remind Your Honour that the authority for this proposition is found in the citation of Beauchesne that has been referred to, and it is quoted there as a precedent applicable to proceedings in the Canadian House of Commons. Beauchesne rests his authority on May, and the relevant citation is to be found in May's 17th edition at page 527, subparagraph (3).

• (5:00 p.m.)

It—

That is the house.

—may seek further information in relation to the bill by committees.

This is a citation with respect to the English parliament which is carried forward on the authority of Beauchesne as applicable to the Canadian parliament. The citation then gives some examples of cases where it has been done in the English House of Commons. I admit freely that the citations refer to instances some scores of years ago but, Mr. Speaker, the point is that they are there as citations and authorities still binding and applicable in the English House of Commons.