

*Public Bills*

There are just two brief suggestions I have to make. I was quite surprised that the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) put so many bills on the Order Paper this session. This brought home the fact that there should be a limit on the number of bills a member can put on the Order Paper. The table knows I have campaigned for three or four years for such a limit. There should perhaps be a limit on the position that each member gets in the draw, similar to as the practice in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Francis:** Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question? I wonder whether he would agree with the suggestion that each member should have the privilege of submitting two bills for what we euphemistically call the ballot, and that any other private member's bill should go to the end of the list. In other words, there would be a maximum of two for any individual member that would be in fact assigned to come up for debate.

**Mr. Bell:** I think this suggestion has some merit. Perhaps we could make a choice as to which suggestion is acceptable. I am not an authority on the British House, but I think in some way these measures are brought forward by unanimous consent. I think if there ever was a time when there was unanimity in this House, it was when these matters of interest were brought forward. This would have to be done by unanimous consent. I know there is disagreement as to the final outcome of this procedure, but it is worthy of consideration. A bill of current and important interest might in some way be brought forward.

If we adopted this suggestion the interns we have in the House could work very well. They are really conscientious young fellows. This system came about through a private member's motion and I think it is worthy of commendation. There has been discussion about the interns, or a group of them, interesting themselves particularly in the private members' hour. It might not be very thrilling to pass this subject off to some of them, but they might take it on as their special interest. There might be one from each party to see that we do a better job, by giving us a little of their thinking of the situation as viewed from the gallery. In other words, by appointing them to study the private members' hour we might ourselves benefit.

I commend the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) for having the fortitude, perseverance and insight to bring forward this motion. I am quite sure the luck of the draw was involved, because it was one of the first to come forward. That is the only good sign I can see, because as I look across the Chamber I sense that the motion will be talked out.

**Mr. Ralph Stewart (Cochrane):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to speak on this subject, but it is unfortunate I have to do so during private members' hour. We are wasting an hour of private members' time, just as we wasted an hour on Friday talking about procedure, when private members have all kinds of ideas which should be brought before the House. This is a matter

which should be discussed by the committee. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) says he has been sitting on the Committee on Procedure and Organization for years. I cannot help wondering why this subject has not been discussed in the committee before now. I cannot understand why a number of these questions have not been discussed by that committee.

The fact that a young upstart from Cochrane put 40 private member's bills on the Order Paper seems to have upset the whole applecart around here. It seems that up to now nobody thought these ridiculous rules needed to be changed. They not only need to be changed with regard to the number of bills each private member may have; they also need to be changed with regard to the number of bills put forward per party in the House. This was something I was trying to offset because of the silly unbalance we had before.

It seems to me that in respect of this question of private members' bills and their number there have been some very good suggestions by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). If there is an allotment and a limitation according to the number of members in the House, it could not help but be in line with the number of members in each party. In that case, I think this is a good suggestion.

What I cannot understand is why there is so much consternation among some members of this House, and even on the part of the Chair, when a number of private members' bills are introduced according to the rules. I cannot understand why the rules have not been changed before. Why should it take a young upstart to bring this matter to the attention of the House? How long will it take and how many more upstarts will have to get up and speak about the ridiculous spectacle of a Speech from the Throne being made to a half empty Senate, with 264 Members of Parliament fighting to get through the door, before something is done?

How many other stupid rules do we have in this House just because some of the old fogies who sit here feel they have to continue with the old traditions of Parliament? There are 100 young members in this House—I have raised this matter on a number of occasions—who did not come here to sit and look at the old-fashioned ways of doing business. We came here with the intention of bringing forth ideas to reform this place.

Just as the leader of the Liberal party said during the last election, we are going to reform the rules of Parliament. There are some of us who want to reform those rules. I wonder if it is necessary to go to the extremes we have had to in order to bring about reform. I suggest that a subject such as this should be constantly before the Committee on Procedures and Organization. There are any number of rules of this House that should be changed. Why do we make statements on motions? We call them motions, but they are statements. We call public bills private bills, and private bills public bills.

There are any number of things which to the uninitiated who might walk in here would cause them to say that we in the House of Commons are a bunch of nuts. How many Canadians come here and say that, because of the

[Mr. Bell.]