

seen a blinding light? Has he suddenly been awakened to what is the right thing to do? Where is the hon. member? Is he in the environs of the House? Could he come into the House and tell us where he stands? We have learned a lesson in the last week, that in so far as the official opposition is concerned, it is not enough to have the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) tell us where he stands on banking definitions, because that is not necessarily where his party stands at all. It is not enough to have the hon. member who sponsored the resolution last week about patriating the constitution tell—

Mr. Yurko: Edmonton East.

Mr. Simmons: I thank the hon. member for letting me know his constituency. I apologize to him for not knowing it. It is not enough for the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko) to tell us where he stands on patriating the constitution, unless we know where his party stands. It is the same with this particular case.

An hon. Member: Let's get it to committee.

Mr. Simmons: What goes on in those committees, Mr. Speaker? This gentleman down here is all excited about getting this bill into committee. He just had his chance. We have heard his views, such as they were. He supports the bill. The hon. member probably did not hear me, but I said that I support the bill.

Mr. Benjamin: Then sit down.

Mr. Simmons: In order for this bill to get through this House, I want to know where the official opposition stands. The hon. member for Crowfoot, who is in the caucus of the official opposition, avoided saying where his party stands. I do not suggest that he avoided saying so deliberately, but he did not say where the official opposition stands. Perhaps he, like I, learned a valuable lesson last week, thanks to the hon. member for Edmonton East, that if one wants to know where the official opposition stands on any particular minute—and it may change from minute to minute—the very least one should do is insist that the Leader of the Opposition be dragged into the chamber, and dragged to his feet to tell us where he stands.

The Leader of the Opposition is at that point in time where he is concerned, as we all are from time to time, about security of tenure. He is not sure how long the job will last. But in the interest of making it last as long as possible, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is doing some fairly unpredictable things these days. The one place where the hon. member knows that he can have the undoubted support of his caucus is in this chamber when he stands up to say something. For that reason hon. members will notice that he is not saying much in the chamber these days. Could we have the Leader of the Opposition come into the chamber and tell us where he stands on Bill C-209? Is he for it? Can the member for Crowfoot indicate that he is for it? Let the records show, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Crowfoot has informed this House that his leader, the hon. member for Yellowhead, is in favour of this piece of legislation.

Byelections

Now we should all watch, with bated breath, the television news tonight because, even as I talk, the Leader of the Opposition is probably out there undercutting his friend from Crowfoot, just as he undercut the hon. member for Edmonton East, all in the interest of getting his face on television and having another television interview.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

● (1800)

Mr. Simmons: He is back—no, that is not the leader, it is the gentleman from Alberta, but not at the moment at least, the leader. I am sure he is aware of it. I am talking about the present Leader of the Opposition. I would note that at this moment he is for the legislation; that is good news indeed, but I warn the hon. member for Crowfoot that as we speak, as he rises and supports the bill, his leader is out there somewhere, wherever he can find a camera, doing something to cut the very legs from under the hon. member. I hope not, because this bill is a commendable piece of legislation and I invite all hon. members of the House to give it their vigorous support.

Mr. Bill Yurko (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, this bill brings back some memories, particularly the fact that the first time I was elected it was in a byelection held on the resignation of one of the most distinguished senators in this country, Senator Manning. That happened in a winter when we had the coldest period in the province of Alberta on record. So, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing to suggest that there cannot be a byelection in the wintertime.

Bill C-209 is, I believe, sound in principle. It can be applied administratively without difficulty. Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor):

That the question regarding second reading of Bill C-209 and referral to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be now put.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It is moved by the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Yurko) and seconded by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor):

That the question regarding second reading of Bill C-209 and referral to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be now put.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Collenette: A point of order—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is debatable. I recognize the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette).

Mr. Collenette: Mr. Speaker, this is highly irregular.

An hon. Member: No, it is not.

Mr. Collenette: If we get down to brass tacks, we made a special order in this House less than an hour ago out of courtesy to the opposition and the hon. member for Crowfoot