

version. I had to buy the English and the French versions. I went to the Library of Parliament and asked if the Library could obtain a copy of the report. I felt something was being covered up. The Library could not get a copy of the report from the Tariff Board.

Finally, I called the Tariff Board secretary and said I would raise this subject on the floor of the House of Commons and "Do I get a copy or don't I?" The Tariff Board is an agency of the Government of Canada, and this was an out-in-the-open public hearing. I asked why the report was being withheld and why I could not read it. I had a copy within half an hour. The Tariff Board sent it over to my office by messenger. I read the report through and obtained a lot of detail.

I put all this on the record because I wanted to illustrate an actual case of abuse of regulation, abuse of power or indiscriminate and arbitrary use of power by an official not backed up by regulatory or statutory authority of any kind which absolutely ruined a man's business.

One might ask whether it was a very large business. Before the business went into manufacturing, it was earning net profits of about \$400,000 a year and paying taxes on that to the government. A tax-producing operation was destroyed through the arbitrary use of power. Two hundred people were thrown out of work. Those people had to collect unemployment insurance benefits and so forth. All this revolves around the definition of whether something is manufacturing or producing and how those terms are defined in the mind of an official.

We should not allow arbitrary decisions like these to be made. Somehow we as members of this House have to find a mechanism. I am sure in a co-operative way we can find a mechanism whereby these matters can be dealt with, amendments can be made and some process can be found which would allow matters such as this to be handled, aired and resolved to the benefit of all concerned.

I believe one of my colleagues wishes to make a further contribution, and I will yield the floor to him.

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Mr. Speaker, I think this has been a very important debate this afternoon. Some people might look on it as academic and rather esoteric or peculiar to the rules and the way business is normally conducted in this House, but the hon. member from Calgary who spoke ably made the point that what we are really talking about is the essence of the democratic system.

It is heartening to those of us who have had the opportunity to be here this afternoon that, by and large, the tone of this debate has been at quite a high level. The parliamentary secretary who spoke made reference to this and I think it is worth noting. I suppose the one exception I must make—and I find this sad—is the remarks of the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton). The hon. member did not really use the opportunity this afternoon to make a contribution to the debate at a level which might be considered a high level. I find that unfortunate.

I have been at meetings of this committee—not as many as I would have liked, but a few—and I think it is a very useful and necessary committee of this House. When we have a chance to debate an issue such as this, I think it is important that we use

Regulations and other Statutory Instruments

the opportunity to discuss the real issues in as non-partisan a way as possible so that we have an atmosphere which brings out the best in the members who attend.

Government today is a very large operation. We have a saying in the cattle business that when we buy feed for livestock, the best is only half good enough, if we are to get performance from our livestock. In many ways that is true in this House. If we send the best representatives possible to the House, that is only half good enough in terms of getting what we need out of this place. If our system is not conducive to getting the best from Members of Parliament and if hon. members do not use the opportunities they have to put forward their best in debates such as this, we are all losers. When I say "we" I mean this chamber and the people we represent. I think everybody loses.

It is important that we keep some of those considerations in mind because government is very large today and becomes so involved with us on a day-to-day basis that it is very difficult for this place to do the best job it possibly can. As government governs more, the people who elected us have less and less say about what we do, because as government has more and more to do, almost by definition it has to delegate and set up boards, tribunals and regulatory bodies to enforce the regulations which are made.

The hon. member who preceded me made the point that he does not see why we could not more often have regulations attached to acts. I agree with him totally. As a new member I have seen that only once, and that was with respect to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. That was so long ago that I cannot even remember the number of the bill, but I think it was passed some two years ago. At the committee stage we had a chance to look at some of the regulations which would accompany that legislation. That was a very useful exercise because it gave the parliamentarians who would be passing the law a chance to look at the regulations which would flow from it. I see the chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport here today, and I know he would agree with me that it was a very useful exercise to look at the regulations at the same time as we looked at the bill, because we had a chance to discuss how the regulations would be enforced by the Department of Transport.

I do not see why that cannot be done more often, which brings me to the Standing Joint Committee on Regulations and other Statutory Instruments. It seems to me that it is the job of that committee to look at regulations and other instruments we use to enforce laws passed in this House. The number of orders in council we have has been referred to several times this afternoon. Orders in council are in addition to all the regulations passed and those which accompany bills which we pass. There are 3,500, 3,700 or 4,000 orders in council. I think we have passed 125 or 129 bills in this session. That amounts to a tremendous number of pieces of legislation and regulations passed each year or, in the case of bills, passed each session. If individual members are to do their job, then