

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BILL

SECOND READING

Hon. Mr. Robertson moved second reading of Bill C, an Act to amend the Department of Justice Act.

He said: Honourable senators, I have asked the honourable senator from Inkerman (Hon. Mr. Hugessen) to explain this bill.

Hon. A. K. Hugessen: Honourable senators, this is an exceedingly simple bill, consisting merely of two lines. It adds to the Department of Justice Act a new definition, as follows:

(1a) The Deputy Minister of Justice shall *ex officio* be the Deputy Attorney General.

I am advised that the reason for this amendment is that the Exchequer Court provides that, in certain matters relating particularly to actions against the Crown in the Exchequer Court, certain documents must be signed by the Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General. In the absence of a definition of the Deputy Minister of Justice as Deputy Attorney General it has been necessary for the Minister of Justice himself, in his capacity of Attorney General, to sign all these papers. The object of inserting this new definition in the Act is merely to permit the Deputy Minister of Justice to act as Deputy Attorney General for the purpose of signing these papers in place of the Minister of Justice himself.

Hon. Mr. Leger: What difference is there between the "Minister of Justice" and the "Attorney General"?

Hon. Mr. Hugessen: In practice there is no difference, but I understand that certain statutes confer certain powers by name upon the Attorney General or the Deputy Attorney General without referring to them as Minister of Justice or Deputy Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: This simple little bill, to which I have no objection whatsoever, affects the present Deputy Minister of Justice, and therefore I think it is quite in order and apropos to point out that Canada for a good many years has enjoyed the services of a very eminent, highly qualified and most efficient Deputy Minister of Justice, in the person of Mr. F. P. Varcoe. He will be the gentleman who will receive the authority conferred by this section, and to no one could responsibility be given by this house with more confidence. Over the years I have quite frequently been in touch with this official. Before the dissolution of the last parliament I had the pleasure, satisfaction and edification of hearing him address the Committee on Civil Rights. A more thoroughly educated lawyer and a man more competent in his position could scarcely be imagined.

It is not often that we have an opportunity of recognizing the ability and erudition of civil service personnel such as we have at this moment, as a result of this bill which points directly to this official. I extend to him my congratulations, and I hope that he will live long to exercise the added authority which we are now giving him.

The motion was agreed to, and the bill was read the second time.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

CONCURRENCE IN REPORT

Hon. A. B. Copp moved concurrence in the report of the Committee of Selection.

Hon. Mr. Aseltine: Honourable senators, it is very important that this motion should be passed today, because the first organization meeting of the Divorce Committee will be held at 10.30 tomorrow morning.

The motion was agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEES

MOTION OF APPOINTMENT

Hon. Mr. Robertson: Honourable senators, with leave, I desire to move:

That the senators mentioned in the report of the Committee of Selection as having been chosen to serve on the several standing committees during the present session, be and they are hereby appointed to form part of and constitute the several committees with which their respective names appear in said report, to inquire into and report upon such matters as may be referred to them from time to time, and that the Committee on Standing Orders be authorized to send for persons, papers and records whenever required; and also that the Committee on Internal Economy and Contingent Accounts have power, without special reference by the Senate, to consider any matter affecting the internal economy of the Senate, and such committee shall report the result of such consideration to the Senate for action.

The motion was agreed to.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY

MESSAGE TO THE COMMONS

Hon. Mr. Robertson: Honourable senators, with leave, I desire to move:

That a message be sent to the House of Commons by one of the Clerks at the Table, to inform that house that the Honourable the Speaker, the Honourable Senators Aseltine, Aylesworth, Sir Allen, Blais, David, Fallis, Gershaw, Gouin, Jones, Lambert, Leger, MacLennan, McDonald, Reid, Vien and Wilson, have been appointed a committee to assist the Honourable the Speaker in the direction of the Library of Parliament, so far as the interests of the Senate are concerned, and to act on behalf of the Senate as members of a joint committee of both houses on the said library.

The motion was agreed to.