

*Revised Statutes*

My hon. friend made reference to the fact that the new Government has perhaps not passed as much legislation as the previous Government. I am a bit ambivalent about that observation because, as you know, the traditional Conservative philosophy is the less law, the better. Less intrusive government is better government. Freedom of the people is our main concern and we do not want government telling us what to do at every step, but I do not want to get involved in a philosophical discussion with the Opposition which I would necessarily win.

In 1985 we had 63 new chapters enacted in law. In 1986 it was 55. To date in 1987, 43 have been passed. That does not include Private Members' Bills. What can I say? The average number of Bills passed by our predecessor Government between 1980 and 1984 was in the vicinity of 43 per year. We hope to emphasize quality over quantity and we have some repair work to do. Maybe in our next term we will get down to a more appropriate number.

That is a bit of a long answer but the fact is that the time has been required. There have been improvements to the text. There was the work on the French version. There was work as a result of the observations made by Hon. Members with respect to the loose-leaf form which will be of assistance to the general public. All these considerations, innovations and improvements augur well for accessibility of the statutes of Canada to the general public. After all, that should be pre-eminent in our thinking. We want to make sure we are serving the public in the best way possible.

**Mr. Kaplan:** Madam Chairman, I would like to give the Minister the opportunity to discuss revision of the regulations. Is that process under way and what sort of a date are we looking at?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** As my friend from York Centre will appreciate, regulations flow from statutes. The sequence is to bring the statutes into line and up-to-date and then turn our attention to the question of the regulations under those statutes.

In all candor, we have not yet entered into that area, which is very important, but once we get this out of the way I intend to have discussions with my officials in order to canvass the options available to us so we can bring some appropriate response to the mounds of regulations we have in this country.

In that connection, the Hon. Member for York Centre is in the very important position of co-chairing the Joint Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments. I am very familiar with that committee, having served on it for many years. It does excellent work and I want to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation to the Hon. Member. When I was appointed to it I thought it was a form of punishment, but over the course of attending meetings it becomes quite a fascinating committee where you really get a chance to understand the volume and importance of regulations in our society. I know the Hon. Member has a legitimate interest in

this subject and I appreciate any suggestions from him and members of his committee.

● (1150)

**Mr. Boudria:** Madam Chairman, approximately when does the Minister think the statutes will be available? Will all Members be provided copies in our offices as has been customary in the past upon publication of new statutes?

I was amazed when I was elected in 1984—

**Mr. Keeper:** That was amazing.

**Mr. Boudria:** Maybe that in itself was amazing given the Conservative tide. Perhaps the Member for Winnipeg North Centre is correct.

However, I was quite amazed when I asked for a set of statutes and a set of regulations after being elected and was told that I could not get either. I thought it was a bit much for a legislator, upon asking for a publication of the laws which Parliament has passed, to be told that they were not available. I hope that when they are printed, they will be printed in sufficient quantity to ensure that, in the unlikely event that any Member of this House is defeated in the next election, the new Member will have available to him or her a copy of the statutes in order that they can discharge the duties they are elected to perform with the most basic of tools.

I realize that one of the reasons we stopped publishing them some time ago is we were awaiting this fresh consolidation. However, I was elected on September 4, 1984. It is now December 7, 1987 and we do not yet have the statutes. I realize that practically all of the work is done by the time this Bill comes into the House. The Minister is looking for authority to publish work which is probably complete.

I wanted to raise those few points with the Minister and would like to take this opportunity to bring forward a similar issue, that is, that it is almost as difficult to get a copy of the revised regulations as it is to get the statutes. I believe it should be a policy of the Department of Justice, after new Members are sworn in, to provide them with an up-to-date set of statutes and regulations. I am not saying that a Member who is re-elected should be given a second set, but each Member should have available to him or her the most up-to-date statutes in existence at that time.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Madam Chairman, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his comments and observations. The Publication of Statutes Act does specify those individuals who are entitled, as a matter of right, to receive the statutes of Canada. My hon. friend will be pleased to know that Members of Parliament are included along with such other luminaries as the Section 96 judges.

I cannot explain why the Hon. Member has not received the statutes. It is very likely because of the revision which is now going forward. I am sure that we will have this relatively up to date revised set of statutes by March of the coming year,