

Mr. KING (Kootenay): Yes, we have had the hearty cooperation of the provincial and municipal police with the mounted police and our own officers in the enforcement of this act.

Progress reported.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS BRANCH LINES

PILKINGTON-NIAGARA JUNCTION

On the order:

House in committee on Bill No. 167, an Act to amend an act respecting the construction of a Canadian National railway line between Pilkington and Niagara Junction, in the province of Ontario. (Withdrawal recommended by the select standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines).—The Minister of Railways and Canals.

Hon. CHARLES A. DUNNING (Minister of Railways and Canals): I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that Bill No. 167 be withdrawn and this order discharged.

Mr. SPEAKER: By unanimous consent, of course.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING ORDER 37

RULING OF MR. SPEAKER ON POINT OF ORDER

Mr. SPEAKER: I promised on Wednesday to give a ruling on the question then raised with respect to standing order 37. I may be allowed to read my ruling to-night:

On Wednesday, the 8th of May, Mr. Robb, on the orders of the day being called, moved:

That Mr. Speaker, do now leave the chair for the house to resolve itself into committee of ways and means.

Thereupon Mr. Woodsworth rose from his seat and said:

Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring before the house a matter that affects a considerable section of this country.

He then recited his grievances having reference to freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly.

Having spoken forty minutes, I told him his time was up. The hon. member claimed that he was entitled under standing order 37 to speak beyond forty minutes. He was supported in this connection by other hon. members.

I have been requested to consider more deeply the objection raised. Accordingly, I have gone very carefully into the study of standing order 37, adopted by this house two years ago. If one reads carefully the new rule, it will be found that in order to limit the length of speeches which were unduly

[Mr. Spencer.]

protracted, parliament came to the conclusion that a forty-minute rule should henceforward apply to the debates in the house.

Exceptions were, however, made to that rule and they are set forth in standing order 37, which reads as follows:

Standing order 37. Speeches limited to forty minutes, 22nd March, 1927.

No member, except the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition, or a minister moving a government order and the member speaking in reply immediately after such minister or a member making a motion of "no confidence" in the government and a minister replying thereto, shall speak for more than forty minutes at a time in any debate.

271a. The following resolution was adopted by the house on April 19, 1886:

"That the growing practice in the Canadian House of Commons, of delivering speeches of great length, having the character of carefully and elaborately prepared written essays, and indulging in voluminous and often irrelevant extracts, is destructive of legitimate and pertinent debate upon public questions, is a waste of valuable time, unreasonably lengthens the sessions of parliament, threatens by increased bulk and cost to lead to the abolition of the official report of the debates, encourages a discursive and diffuse, rather than an incisive and concise style of public speaking, is a marked contrast to the practice in regard to debate that prevails in the British House of Commons, and tends to repel the public from a careful and intelligent consideration of the proceedings of parliament."

It is argued that the hon. member, by addressing the house as he did on Wednesday, came under the exception "or a minister moving a government order and the member speaking in reply immediately after such minister."

My ruling hinges on the interpretation to be given to the words, "speaking in reply." Was the hon. gentleman speaking "in reply" to the motion, "that I do now leave the chair for the house to resolve itself into committee of ways and means"?

He was, as a matter of fact, airing grievances which had no relevancy whatsoever with the subject matter, namely: resolution to amend the Special War Revenue Act by the Minister of Finance in the committee of ways and means.

It is a fundamental principle of parliamentary government that the redress of grievances is to be considered before the granting of supplies (vide Bourinot, p. 419). This principle applies with equal force when the motion is made for the Speaker to leave the chair to go into ways and means. Members may address the house on any subject of public importance or move amendments under the same rules as governed on going into committee of supply (vide Bourinot, p. 423).